

Tensions have recently re-emerged in Femal Liberation around questions of sexuality: Lesbians and straight women each feeling oppressed by the other; women confused about their own sexuality and shy of labeling; women concerned about a lack of support for Lesbian issues. Conflicts about sexuality in general have been responsible for cross-intimidation of straight women and Lesbians; women who have not defined their sexuality have been lost in the shuffle.

While there had been extensive discussion of the politics of sexuality two years ago and we had undertaken some related political activity such as participation in Gay Pride Week and some public forums, in 1972 the issue gradually vanished from our activity and discussion. By last fall, indications of our need to confront the issues were becoming evident. A new group of sisters were coming out, with all the self-questioning involved in that. Entries in our Collective Journal from members and non-members alike reflected sexual confusion and intimidation; we were rightly criticized for a noticeable lack of literature about Lesbians in our bookstore and library. A new interest in vaginal self-examination had raised the issue of one's own body-awareness, and looking at other women's cervixes brought about in some sisters a direct confrontation of their feelings about sexuality. Reports and rumors of Lesbian/straight conflicts in other cities had become disturbing, as had the lack of discussion of Lesbianism in the general feminist press. Women new to the organization had not been through past discussions, and they had many questions. Informal discussions abounded. The difficulty of expressing our feelings in general aggravated the situation.

These current problems are not the same as the great gay/straight battles of a few years ago, nor are they as tension-ridden as we understand the situation to be in some other cities. The problems are more subtle now, but they are very real and there is still much to be worked out.

We have found that there has been intimidation on both sides. But it is not enough for straight women to say "You oppress us, too." Though Lesbians may sometimes oppress straight women within the movement, the fact remains that Lesbians are oppressed in every aspect of their existence. Straight women may tire of hearing "gay is good," feeling that it implies that straight is not good, but we need to recognize that straight women are not oppressed as totally as Lesbians are and that Lesbianism, because of this, has political meaning that heterosexuality does not have.

Lesbian oppression in society is political punishment for being upply. Laws deny Lesbians their very existence, and discrimination in jobs and housing is very real. So are social attitudes that define Lesbianism as a sickness and even back up these attitudes selectively with incarceration in mental hospitals and jails. This oppression affects Lesbians directly, straight women indirectly. No woman can be free until all Lesbians are free, for if the option of Lesbianism is closed, no one can fully know her own sexuality.

Out of the conflict between gay and straight, a third oppression has arisen. It seems that all of us, in struggling for the space and the right to be who we are sexually, have trampled on the feelings and infringed on the rights of others. In dealing with the problem of Lesbian oppression, we have learned that it is absolutely necessary to deal with the problems of being

straight, bisexual, celibate, confused, in transition, and so on. Undefined women have felt mistrusted by Lesbians and straight women alike. The pressure to label one's sexuality denies a woman the right to discover her own sexuality through her own process at her own pace. This pressure does not allow for periods of transition, nor does it allow for openness to alternatives. Lesbians pressure women to declare their sexuality so they will know who is part of their community. Women without a clearcut sexual identity become politically invisible when sexual issues are discussed. Furthermore, there is a urgent need to resolve one's own confusion. The temptation becomes very strong to seize a sexual role for oneself before one has thought it out enough or is ready for all its implications. Just as we have resisted the attempts by men to define us, we must be careful not to allow pressure from other women to force us into making choices we're not ready for.

A specific pressure that Lesbians have felt has been the unreal expectation that they live up to an image of the "ideal relationship" between women, sort of a mythologized sisterhood. A Lesbian couple who exhibit signs of human frailty such as quarrelling with each other threaten the myth, and sometimes incur resentment for it. It is easy for straight women to criticize Lesbian relationships; the straight women's own relationships don't come under such close scrutiny since their lovers are outside the group's activities.

Since straight women are so burdened by sex-role expectations, they tend to be supersensitive to the issue of role-playing, and they respond negatively when they see it in Lesbian couples. Anything suspected of being either "too butch" or "too femme" is taken to be "incorrect" feminist behavior. But just as it is oppressive to have to mold one's identity to the traditional stereotypes, it is also oppressive to have to possess some mythical ideal balance of "male" and "female" qualities. Struggling out of role stereotypes doesn't mean being an exact blend of 50 percent yin and 50 percent yang. Society has lumped all human qualities into two packages labeled male or female and then assigned the female package to us. To create a third ideal, the absolute balance, legitimizes the original division and creates yet another oppressive role. Each of us needs to be free to discover which personality traits she is comfortable with, and we must respect our sisters' personalities.

Some straight women have complained that they too have felt pressure to conform to an idealized balance. But women whose personalities tend toward the traditionally "feminine" side are more readily accepted because we all understand the social pressures that condition us to be like that. However, women who are considered "too butch" don't get the same kind of understanding, because they are seen as being too much like men. Their behavior makes us uncomfortable because it is outside the norm we were taught to find acceptable.

A problem affecting both gay and straight women here has been fear of disapproval for expressing their sexual feeling in the group either physically or verbally. Straight women describe their fears of being thought "politically incorrect" while Lesbians fear being perceived as "offensive." No one feels comfortable about bringing up problems with lovers, for instance. Straight women want to avoid the reaction, "That's what you get for hanging around with men. What did you expect?" They are aware that the "ideal feminist" is not

supposed to be economically, physically, or emotionally dependent on men. Lesbians are afraid of threatening straight women, thus provoking negative, defense reactions that only reinforce the divisions.

In addition to verbal inhibitions, Lesbians in the group have felt pressured not to be overtly physical - in effect, they have been expected to compromise their Lesbian identity in deference to new straight women who might feel threatened. But there hasn't been a comparable concern that straight women might be alienating new Lesbians from the group. We have found it easier to ignore the psychological threat posed to a Lesbian by a straight woman than vice versa.

The effect of this is not only to alienate Lesbians, but to edge the Lesbian back into the closet. We recognize that we all have deeply ingrained prejudices against physical displays of affection of any kind. But we feel Female Liberation has improved significantly as a place where one can feel comfortable with physical affection among both Lesbians and straight women. This is both from a growing awareness of the importance of dealing with problems of sexuality and simply because we're getting to be more comfortable with our bodies.

It has been to our advantage that women in the group have been openly gay in the past, and we've tried to make clear our attitude that it is politically right-on to discuss sexual problems and to be gay. By working and playing together, we've come to know each other as individuals, and this has prevented a lot of the backbiting which prevails in some organizations.

One of the problems of Lesbians relating to straight women - particularly if either is new to the Movement - is that of "signal-reading." Just what will be interpreted as a sexual advance and what is simply a gesture of friendship is unclear. In such an encounter, both women feel ill-at-ease and awkward. The difference, however, is that the Lesbian tends to err on the conservative side; she still has the stereotyped image of the Dyke-Rapist to contend with and is often likely to be accused of being macho, physically coercive, or objectifying a sister if a nonsexual expression of affection is misinterpreted. The straight woman has much greater latitude for physical expression of feelings, since it is assumed that she has no "ulterior" sexual motive for hugging a sister. She is therefore frequently not held accountable for objectifying a Lesbian sister, even if that is in fact the case. It often happens that a straight woman will (consciously or not) flirt with a Lesbian, trying to manipulate her sexually, not because she is who she is but because she is a Lesbian and therefore in a position to gratify the sexual ego of the straight woman. And so, while any woman is capable of objectifying any other woman, the tendency is to look for it among Lesbians and to ignore it in straight women.

The obverse side of this is the uncertainty of straight women who are trying to be as politically and personally considerate as possible. To define oneself immediately as straight, for instance, can be offensively assertive to a Lesbian who has been told over and over again that being straight is being right. But not to define herself leaves a straight woman open to unintentionally flirting with a Lesbian, implying a sexual interest that

isn't there and thus inviting a pass which she will then rebuff.

Our discussions have also revealed political confusion of straight women as to how they could support Lesbians. "Do you find it offensive for me to be wearing a gay button?" asks a straight woman who says she does it sometimes to show solidarity. A Lesbian present said no, that Lesbians can't always risk being openly gay in public, but it is important for people to see women wearing gay buttons, holding hands in public, and so on to show that Lesbians do exist all over. Straight women can with impunity publicize the gay movement in a way that Lesbians can't always do. But there needs to be an explicit understanding that even the most sympathetic straights cannot speak for Lesbians personally, nor make political decisions for them.

A look at ourselves reveals that most of the Lesbians in Female Liberation have come out within the group, but not before or outside the women's movement. This indicates strong support in the group for coming out. There is some sanctuary for Lesbians in Female Liberation and we want to enlarge upon that feeling. But we are also conscious of a failure to meet the needs or interests of Lesbians who have come out outside the women's movement. This situation reflects our acceptance of an ideology which recognizes the value of Lesbianism as a revolutionary concept, but fails to accept the personal realities of Lesbianism.

We've observed this lack in the women's movement at large, with the exception of exclusively Lesbian-feminist organizations, resulting in serious conflict within an organization and/or outright discrimination. We're trying to correct this on both a political and personal level. Politically, we are making a greater effort to include discussion of Lesbianism in The Second Wave, in our newsletter, on our radio show, and by publishing articles on the subject in local newspapers. We intend to carry more Lesbian literature in our bookstore and to co-sponsor the "freedom of sexual expression" clause in the Massachusetts Equal Rights Amendment. We are seeking participation in and/or sponsoring more extensive and direct political action concerning the issue.

On a personal level, we are making an effort to examine ourselves and the way we relate to each other in order to understand better the subtleties - conscious or unconscious - of sexual oppression within our organization. We are optimistic about our ability to resolve whatever conflicts exist among ourselves because, although we recognize that a problem has existed, Lesbians in the organization have always felt free and assertive in defining themselves politically as gay. And now, in this stage of our development, that freedom and assertiveness is being extended to a personal level.

An organization which discourages dialogue about the personal aspects of Lesbianism, in addition to being oppressive to the Lesbians involved, also deprives itself of a rich source of learning. In the first place, such discussion opens up the question of sexuality itself and points out the alternative to heterosexuality. It underscores the issue of roles in a relationship and raises questions regarding the value of defining one's sexual identity.

Also, since one of our primary commitments as feminists is to come to understand

the concept of "Sisterhood" - how can we best relate to each other - the inner dynamics of a relationship between two Lesbians often brings out into the open the results of vulnerability (jealousy, hurt, insecurity, dependence, etc.) which are present, but not always as obvious, in a nonsexual relationship between women. Most of us have been socialized in such a way as to make us feel more vulnerable once sex has been introduced into a relationship; fears and needs which we can hide most of the time are not so easy to avoid in bed. Dealing with these feelings is essential to straight women as well as Lesbians if we are to be "sisters" in anything more than a superficial way.

Bringing up discussions of Lesbianism on a personal level tends to raise the question of the political implications of Lesbianism. If the atmosphere is such that non-Lesbians don't feel guilt-tripped about their sexual preference, the political advantages of alternative life-styles such as living without men or raising children in a Lesbian household can be considered without threatening individuals in the organization. Female Liberation recognizes the need for more extensive analysis of the politics of Lesbian feminism, and we hope to find out more about it in the near future. So far, we've been too busy simply working out feelings of intimidation about sexuality on the part of all members to move on to that, but the time to do so is rapidly approaching.

Female Liberation.

SEX PLAY:
A Feminist Sex Manual

by
The Rainbow and Lightening Collective

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INTRODUCTION

This is a celebration of sexuality--of life in its joy and strength.

Yet sacrifice is always involved.

This comes from many women's experience.

For years we have been learning and teaching, crying, laughing,
and screaming.

We wanted to look at our selves.

We wanted to peel off societies layers.

Visions appeared. If we peel this off, surely there's happiness
underneath.

Underneath, we always found life--which is good and beautiful--and
painful and sorrowful.

Did we get somewhere? Yes. Some of our layers are off.

We think we can see some things more clearly now. And we want to
share.

We want all women to become engaged in the process of looking
and searching--of being aware of themselves and those around them.

Come join us in our journey.



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Sex is joined with the rest of life.

Touch alone does not mean sex.

Emotions, and minds, and souls come with our bodies.

We don't leave them behind when we get into bed.

Many forces are coming together when people are joined in the
celebration of life.

Celebrations don't just happen. We make them.

Traditionally they are tied to work at its fulfillment, or nature and
our co-operation with her.

Harvest time, planting time, yearly birth of the sun, and summer
sblstice --the sun at the heighth of its power.

Celebrations are tied to slow growing mysteries.

Many things must be planted with small seeds, and grow slowly
from forces within themselves that take time to awaken
as well as nurturace from the outside.

This manual comes from many women's experiences in the womens movement and the gay movement over the last decade. We have been analysing and experimenting in liberating ourselves from societies conditioning of us as women.

If one has accepted the traditional view of ones nature as a female, one's possibilities in life are indeed limited. If one is not independent, logical, self-confident, able to do minimum repair chores around a house, aggressive enough to cope with psychological pressures from friends and lovers and deal in a confident way with bureaucrats, complaint departments, land lords, etc; in other words if one doesn't learn to act in ways that this society defines as masculine (in case you didn't know , ,to be feminine is to be soft, cuddly, smiling, romantic about lovers, and not harsh and aggressive) one is going to get smashed down by life pretty easily. About the only areas left where one can exert any power will be those weaker than ourselves like children, in fantasy, and romantic or emotional things where sensing others rather than acting out upon them plays a large part. In the section from Masculine/ Feminine role behavior is explored more fully.

Sexuality is part of the rest of life. It is influenced by things outside physical techniques and pleasure zones. Psychological factors determine a large part of whether one is excited and getting pleasure. Patterns of passiveness and activeness and ability or inability to receive and give that are in the rest of our lives also get acted out in our sexual behavior.

Therefore, it's hard to isolate sexual behavior and pleasure for discussion. Many psychological and social factors enter the picture. This manual is designed to give hints or ideas about the wide area of life that sexuality influences. We all have desires for intimacy--both physically and mentally. The way we choose to satisfy these desires--our choice of sexual partners--can determine alot about the quality of our life. Some relationships can be constructive and supportive, and help you grow while others can be destructive and make you have less faith in yourself and your abilities.

Sexuality is one of the strong life forces. Some authorities like Freud and Wilhelm Reich thought that sex was the motivating force behind most of life--from religion to artistic endeavor to military uniforms and parades. Since it's such a strong force in life, Sexuality is an important area in which to strive for harmony. Sexual desires can have positive or negative consequences; sex can be a motivation to get out of the room, do things, meet people, form constructive, supportive relationships and perhaps even create psychic union with joy and enlightenment. Or, sex can be unfulfilling and make one dependent on another pwrson who perhaps is not even good for one psychologically or sexually. Do you use sexuality against yourself to get attracted to people who fuck you over, or do you use sexuality to bring you pleasure and closeness?

There are many conflicts for women in this society who are striving for "sexual liberation". These conflicts are both outside and inside us for most of us have internalized societal norms which often run against human nature. One problem is the double standard of ethics in our society.

of ethics in our society. For a woman to be seen as sexually free is often the same as for her to be seen as a loose or fallen woman. On one hand, we want to be free and we have wanted to talk about liberated relationships and good sexual experiences and how to achieve them; on the other hand we have felt the need to talk about negative things that happen in relationships and we're conscious of not wanting to be put down and exploited as sexual objects. We have grieved to include a picture of the problems and difficulties involved in combining a free sexuality with a repressed fuck-up society.

The first step in solving a problem is to realize that its there. *

*From the scientific method. Known and rehearsed by all scientists.

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SEXUAL PROBLEMS: Frigidity, premature ejaculation

Sex is part of the rest of life. As illustrated in "The Sexual revolution is no joke for women, if one goes off sex for awhile or "never got on to sex" satisfactorily there is much more involved than just one's body not doing the right thing when it's in bed with someone. The problem is more encompassing. It means that there are psychological or social problems in ones life so that ones mind and body don't feel right when one is in the bed.

It can be the result of a lot of things: One may not feel good about one's lover due to things like having power trips laid on you. Sometimes we block out a lot of our dissatisfactions in relationships because things like cravings for any kind of security or affection are very strong.

Or it can be because of past experiences. If we got hurt when we were reaching out and vulnerable, some part of us wants to cut off the possibility of being vulnerable again. even while another part of us can want to have closeness and pleasure with someone.

If I let someone excite me, I am

giving them power over me. I am being both physically and psychologically more vulnerable

to them. Physically, because if I am relaxed in my body and my mind, I'm not cranking up any energy to deal with either physical or mental blows. In daily life I often do.

If I walk down a city street alone at night, my body is tensed and ready to strike out at an instant notice. If I'm in the presence of a lover that I have hurt and that I'm expecting to want to hurt me, my mind is ready to let injurious comments bounce off instead of letting them sink in and dwelling on them. But, if I am in the bed getting in to sensing my lover and touching her and feeling love between us, my barriers to hurts are down. On the other hand, if I'm tense and not excited, I haven't let my barriers down. If you can't get excited with your partner and you want to get into yourself more, try being alone where you won't be interrupted and try making love to your self

or in the usual term masturbating.

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Frignidity and premature ejaculation may seem unrelated, but they both involve an inability in people to allow pleasure and excitement to build up inside themselves so that it can be released in a satisfying climax. Excitement has to build up in order for its release to be powerful and satisfying. (That's according to Wilhelm Reich anyone, way. If your experience is different, by all means trust yourself.)

Part of being able to build up excitement means being able to relax, turn off the part of our mind that worries, and analyses, and get into our body running the show. As Americans our training and usual state of mind is mostly in the opposite direction. We run at a fast pace. Most of us drink coffee. That means as a nation our national drug is speed. Speed isn't just a drug for hippys, the caffeine in coffee is the drug of businessmen, housewives, workers, etc. Usually if you are speeding, you are not sitting down and relaxing and getting in touch with yourself inside your body and your head.

We are all conditioned to do things out there in the world. We have very little occasions when we just be inside ourselves. The basic economic insecurity in our country (see The Rich and the Superrich) means that almost all of us have a very real push to worry and to harrass ourselves about what we are going to do to make a living.

Being product and achievement oriented, when we are in bed we almost have a built in conditioning to speed through the whole process and to get there to the orgasm fast. Maybe because then at least when its all over we can relax and just enjoy the warm glow for a while.

If many of us are cheated in being able to get the warm afterglow, it means that somehow we need to let ourselves be able to experience the glow first. That may mean changing one's life so that one can trust one's partner and/or it may mean getting in touch with ones own body so that we can learn to let excitement and love flow through it.

The beginning can be getting in touch with touching--with sensuality in things that at first might seem unconnected to having a climax. Learning about centering, breathing, and meditating as described in the following sections is a start to getting in touch with oneself. Wilhelm Reich made a lifelong study of sexuality, climaxes, and psychological problems. Movement and breathing exercises have been developed along the lines of his work which are specifically designed to enable one to learn to let excitement build up in the body and to remove the psychological/physical blocks which prevent its building up inside ourselves. Some of these exercises and his theories are described in the section on Movement exercises.

Another avenue to dealing with sexual problems is explained in Human Sexual Inadequacy by Masters and Johnson. Their techniques described in their book use behavior conditioning techniques to teach the body to get excited or to prolong orgasm. Their methods may work; ~~Nixon~~ but they focus on seeing people as bodies to be conditioned more than on seeing people as complexes of emotions and psyches as well as bodies.

SENSUALITY

Genital excitement is a small part of a wide range of experiences coming under the titile sensuality. Sensuality includes many kinds of pleasurable experiences. There is sensual pleasure in stroking a kitten's soft fur, feeling a velvet dress or lightly touching a friends arm. Different scents can evoke sensual feelings as can seeing shining hair or a naked beautiful body.

Some people have had such a strong conditioning in repressing these impulses toward pleasure that they don't notice pleasurable feelings when they do occur. Often the cure for sexual problems such as inability to have orgasms, premature ejacualtion, or unsatisfying climaxes can begin if one reteaches herself to experience sensual things that af first might seem unconnected to having a climax.

Touching is an important part of sensuality as well as being important for mental and physical well being. There is a human psychological need to be touched, held, and caressed apart from the desire for genital orgasmic satisfaction. This need for body contact may increase during perios of stress. Psychological studies have shown that women sometimes use sexual activity with men as a means of getting held rather than for the genital pleasure itself. Sometimes the desire to be cuddled and held is only regarded as acceptable when it is a part of genital sexuality. The wish to be cuddled in a maternal manner (which a large number of us have) can be felt to be childish rather than being accepted as a legitimate human need. To avoid embarrassment or shame some people convert this need into a need for sexaual intercourse.

Another problem in getting held, even if one recognizes the need within herself is finding a person who wants to hold you. Men are often less aware than women of just touching and cuddling as a good thing to do. Men have such pressures put on them about virility and manhood that many of them

sexual intercourse would be unmanly. Sometimes it works to just tell a man that one wants to be held rather than to fuck. Some men want to please their lovers and even enjoy cuddling when they do it, but it has never occurred to them to slow down and hold someone instead of trying to have sex with them.

Another solution is to cuddle with women. Many women are more intouch with the need to just touch and caress than men are. One of the themes in the women's movement today is the recognition of our need to be mothered. Instead of pouring out all our energies on nurturing others--children, husbands elderly ~~parents~~ relatives etc.; all women have a need for and a right to get nurturance themselves. We can mother ourselves and mother each other. Phylis Chesler in Women and Madness has a good discussion of women's need for nurturance.

Children need touching and cuddling too for their psychological health. Babies need human touch so much that they can die if they don't get it. At Bellevue Hospital in New York City, the infant mortality went from 35 to less than 10 per cent in 1938 when "mothering" was introduced to babies. Bellevue Hospital is a dramatic illustration of the need for babies to be held, petted and rocked. The need for physical contact is strong in children too. Children of all ages are more healthy psychologically in later life if they get hugs and physical affection. In fact the need for touching of some kind can become so great that a child will misbehave in order to get the physical contact of being spanked, if he doesn't receive more affectionate physical contact.¹

Wilhelm Reich in the Function of the Orgasm links sadism with sexual repression. "The goal of aggression is...gratifying a vital need. If the pleasure aim is eliminated, then the aggression itself becomes the behavior which will release tension. Aggression becomes pleasurable in itself--in this way sadism arises."²

Many of us have been socialized by this society to have blocks against feelings of

pleasure. We often feel guilt and stop the feelings; or rather, we begin to feel guilt very early as children and all our lives have been cutting off impulses of pleasure before we are aware that we feel them. One doesn't have to just accept this situation, however. There are ways to get back in touch with our bodies and our feelings.

Centering

If our mind is worried about five things at once, it's hard to center on any pleasure we're experiencing. We're worrying instead. Centering or meditating as a way to focus your mind is useful in a lot of areas of life. It can be a help in knowing what our emotions are and in controlling them.

Meditating is a process of sitting down, being still and centering our awareness inside ourselves--getting in touch with ourselves in a way that we usually don't do in daily life. Usually in our daily lives we let thoughts come as they will, with their accompanying emotions and we get absorbed in whatever thoughts or emotions we are having without any way of observing our thoughts and emotions--and getting any sort of perspective about them. Our thoughts batter us around without our being above them. We may start to cook supper, then turn on the radio, and think about something that worries us, then answer the telephone, and talk for awhile, then remember we better turn down the rice. We're really just reacting to what's happening rather than being mindful agents.

The techniques of meditation were developed in the East over thousands of years and are designed to enable one to stop the noise and clatter in one's mind and become mindful of one's inner self. There are many different techniques of meditating, but they all involve focusing one's awareness on a single thought for an extended period of time. They are designed to develop one-pointedness in the mind, to enable the mind to be able to focus on a single thought. While one is sitting and trying to focus on one thing

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many thoughts and emotions will come into the mind. One shouldn't try to force them out with an act of will ; rather you should let them pass through and gently return your awareness back to the object of concentration.

In Zen meditation one sits cross-legged on the floor, with the right foot against the left leg, and the left foot against the right leg, and the spine straight. Your hands should be resting in your lap with the left hand on top of the right, the middle joints together and the thumbs touching gently as if they were holding but not crushing a rose petal. This posture is often painful for those not use to it and sitting in a chair is permitted by some teachers. Then one simply sits and counts one's breaths up to ten and then starts the count over. The goal of meditation is to be able to think of nothing in order to let other kinds of thought happen than we are use to. Since an untrained mind is full of clatter and can't think of nothing it is given something to focus on.

Other points of focus in meditation can be the middle of the forehead, or one's center of gravity--the spot two-thirds of the way down the abdomen from the belly button, a mantra like om which means the beginning and the end and is suppose to be one of the essential sounds of the universe, or a visual object like a candleflame or a mandala, which is an object of visual concentration developed to give one energies and lead one to the center of oneself.

Any activity can also be turned into a meditation if one does it mindfully and concentrates totally on what one is doing rather than letting the mind wander--like walking, cooking, sweeping, or dancing. By running an unchanging stimulus through the nervous system, modes of thought are opened up that we usually don't experience.

Another way to meditate that develops your powers of imagination is by sitting down, closing your eyes and imagining yourself surrounded by a color like blue. Don't think of any shape or form that is blue, just think of blueness. When you can do that you can practice turning the blue into another color.

Movement Exercises

Movement and breathing exercises can help you get in touch with feelings and excitement. Breathing and emotions are connected; any change in your emotions alters your breathing, and conversely, it is possible to change your emotions by consciously changing your breathing patterns.

Many of us have unconsciously learned to control our feelings of excitement by holding our breath and tensing our bodies. This response can happen when we are sexually excited and when making love without our realizing that we are doing it. We can work against ourselves by holding our breath to suppress our excitement. On the other hand, breathing deeply amplifies feelings. Moving freely is another sign of whether we are allowing ourselves to feel excited. If we are controlling our feelings we automatically restrict our body movements. The keys to building up sexual excitement during lovemaking are free body movements without tensions in the back, neck, abdomen, buttocks, or anus and a deep and rhythmic breathing pattern.

However, we obviously don't want to be concentrating on breathing patterns and relaxing when we are making love--we want to concentrate on our feelings and the other person. So, it makes sense to practice breathing and movement at other times.

The first step in doing breathing exercises for increasing sexual excitement is to become aware of our body,--its breathing rhythms and muscle tensions. We also want to pay attention and let ourselves fully experience any emotions, the ~~enxx~~ breathing exercises may evoke. Most of us are very shallow breathers--we only expand our chests a little when we breathe; we don't usually take full breaths pulling in air with the abdomen and the chest. Since breathing and emotions are connected, if we start breathing fully emotions may be released that we usually suppress--fear, anger or even joy and laughing. If you start feeling an emotion, pay attention to it and let

yourself experience it fully.

You may notice body sensations of tingling also in the face or hands or elsewhere. Sometimes you may hyperventilate and numbness may occur. If this happens you should stop breathing deeply until the numbness goes away.

Basic sensing position:

Start by lying on a bed or the floor with your knees up, your feet flat against the floor, and your hand down by your sides with the palms up. Be aware of how your body feels against the floor. Pay attention to any parts of your body that feel tense. Pick one area of your body at a time. As you inhale, exaggerate the tension, and as you exhale release the tension.

Imagine that the air you breathe is flowing into different parts of your body. As you exhale let it flow into your toes, then your feet, up your legs, into your pelvis and throughout your body.

As you exhale, open your mouth and let the air come out in a sigh, making a sound. It can be a soft sound, but the vibration relaxes the throat, and the sounds you make can be an indication of what is going on inside of you. As you do the other exercises, continue to exhale with your mouth open making a sound.

There are two key things in breathing. One is to let the abdomen and chest both expand as you inhale. Usually the chest expands first and then the abdomen expands, but some people reverse this process. The important thing is to let both participate fully. The other key factor is exhalation. Most of us don't let go fully when we exhale. We leave residual air in the lungs preventing us from drawing air in. Exhalation should be a passive releasing, letting the air out. If you pause for a few seconds at the end of each breath, and pay attention to the process of the air going out.

To free the neck and chest: Put your arms out to the side with the palms down. As you inhale, roll your hands and arms in a circle up towards your head. Your chest will come up as your back arches and your head will roll back. As you exhale, roll your hand back to the starting position and over in the opposite direction. This will bring your head and neck up. Do this five times and then do the same movements with the hands and shoulders as you are inhaling and exhaling, but reverse the direction your head moves. Let your head come forward as you inhale and roll back as you exhale. Do this five times and then repeat the original movements. You will probably notice after this exercise that your breathing feels freer.

A great tension releaser is to massage the face and neck. Put your finger tips in the center of your forehead at the top and slowly move them out to the side of the brow and behind your hear. You can imagine that you are soothing the troubles away from oyour brow and wiping them off.

To feel the tensions in your neck, take a small ball or Coke or mild bottle and place it at the back of your neck. Slowly roll your head around and you may feel sore areas in your neck. You can massage the places that are sore. Then massage your brow ridge with your thumbs. Start with the thumbs on the bridge of the nose pressing along the ridge of your eyebrows. Stroke outward to the

temples. , Do this ten times at least co-ordinated with your breathing--one stroke per breath. Finish this part by messaging your temple with the heel of your hand. This is the area that tenses with clenching your teeth.

Stroke just below your eyes, ~~str~~ with the three middle fingers of each hand, starting at the bridge of your nose and carrying the stroke around the top of your ears and the back of your head. Do this stroke ten times and then carry the message down your face to your cheeks using a firm circular motion. Carry the strokes down to the upper lip and then the lower lip and chin. Remember to continue to make sounds with your breathing exhalations while you are messaging your face.

An exercise that is really good for getting you in touch with energies in your body is the pelvic rock. Lie in the basic sensing position, and as you inhale pull your pelvis back towards your head arching your back slightly. Imagine that you are breathing in and out through your ~~genitals~~ genitals. Keep your mouth open and keep making sounds when you exhale as you do this. As you exhale let your pelvis move forward. As you do this your pelvis may feel like bouncing up and down. Let that happen whenever you feel like you want to. Practice this until you feel like you are focused on breathing through your genitals. Do this fifteen times after you feel like your breath is focused on your genitals.

Exhalation should feel like a letting go. Your stomach should be relaxed and not tense. When ever you feel tension or pain in your stomach, neck, shoulder blades or any other part of your body you can practice imagining that the the muscle tension and energy block is flowing down your body in a ripple and eventually out ~~thru~~ through your genitals in an exhalation.

After you feel you have the hang of the pelvic rock which according to Rosenberg

this pelvic rock is
In Total Orgasm the proper way to thrust during intercourse as opposed to thrusting
rigidly with your whole torso.

After you feel you have the hang of the pelvic rock its time to try the pelvic lift.
This exercise is done slowly. As you exhale and let your pelvis go forward raise it up
off the ground one vertebra at a time. Its a meditation in itself to concentrate on
breathing through the genitals, sighing as you exhale and feeling each separate vertebra
as you lift your pelvis higher and higher. Don't worry if you have a hard time
distinguishing each vertebra at first as you practice and your mind focuses ^{more easily} ~~more easily~~.
It will be easier to tell where they are. You should end up rearing on your shoulders
and your feet. Don't be surprised if your pelvis and legs start vibrating or shaking. That
lets you know you have energy in them. Finish the exercise by coming back down one
vertebra at a time. Do this exercise at least eight times.

If you feel like it

You can pause in between lifts and at the end to feel the sensations in your body.
It's common to feel your hands and face tingling. It's also a nice meditation to focus
at times inside your self on your heart and listen with a still mind for what it might
want to tell you. Jung and eastern philosophers have thought that the heart is the
the center of the Self and that one can learn lessons from it if one focuses on it.

A final exercise for feeling energy is the basic bioenergetic stance. Bioenergetics
is a body therapy that has developed from the theories and therapy of Wilhelm Reich.
Stand with your toes turned slightly inward, put your fists in the small of your back
and lean back as far as you can. Your legs will begin to vibrate and shake. It may feel good
to lean your head backward too. Breathe deeply as you do this. Then lean over and let
your arms dangle to the ground. Do this exercise about three times alternating positions
and holding each position for at least one minute.

Total Orgasm discusses these and more exercises including exercises in energy

Meditation-breathing exercises p. 7

flowing and awareness with a partner to develop the capacity for feeling energy in your body while keeping it relaxed and becoming aware of your energy merging with building up a partners which are basic lessons in sensuality and genital sexual excitement culminating in a satisfying orgasm.

DANCING

Dancing is yet another way to experience your body and the energies that can flow within it. Music has energy contained in its creation and can release energies within us. We need to be able to feel our own energy and be able to experience ourselves in order to be able to share energies with another person.

Dancing can get you in touch with the sexual energies within yourself. Choose a time and place where you can dance alone and not be disturbed. Its good to start by sitting and doing some breathing exercises. This gives your mind and body energy and lets your mind calm down and lets you get centered.

As you dance, let the rhythms of the universe flow through your body. You can imagine energy flowing in from the universe into your hands and down your arms and through your body and out your feet. Sometimes it may feel ~~like~~ like the energy gets stopped at different parts of your body. When this happens you can focus on the part and focus on having the energy be able to flow through the tension on releasing it and on through your body. Let energy flow back into your feet up your legs and through your body and up into your head and out.

You can alternate imagining energy flows with just getting into the music and moving the way it makes you feel. In addition to the usual custom of dancing only on one's feet, you can sit or lie down and move to the music too. A nice way of working out feelings of pain and longing is to lie down and imagine that you are moving and striving toward a goal or person that you desire. You can reach out with your hands and arms and curl up and writhe and experience feelings. You can throw in pelvic bounces and rocks when you feel like it too. Part of the pleasure of dancing is to feel your body and its tensions and work them out by tensing the parts and relaxing them which happens as you move your body. Sometimes it feels good to just sit or lie down and do body stretches. You may also feel like just sitting and meditating at times.

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Dancing with a partner, you divide your concentration between the rhythm of the music and the feeling and movement of your partners body. Often when women dance together and don't have to follow the role stereotypes of leader and follower, their movements are united with each other and with the music. The dance flows between them, created by the music and the responses they are giving to each other. This kind of dancing parallels the dance of lovemaking which is a giving and taking of energy between you and your lover.

THE WAY WE LOOK AT SEX AND OURSELVES DOESN'T COME FROM NOWHERE

Our culture- parents, friends, lovers, the media, school, the church, our experiences - have shaped what we think and feel about sexuality as well as the rest of life. For instance, if we look at what the Christian heritage of religious mythology says to women, we see that women who live up to the impossible or unnatural ideal of the virgin (that is sexless) mother, are promised by pictures and intimations the joy of a son like Christ--for example Leonardo da Vinci's Virgin of the Rocks and Parmigianino's Madonna with the Long Neck.

The Christian mythology is so ingrained in us that it is hard to conceive of other mythologies about women; yet they have existed. Phyllis Chesler in Women and Madness writes about the implications of Greek mythology:

In the beginning, if there ever was such a time, Demeter, the goddess of life, gave birth to four daughters, whom she named Persephone, Psyche, Athena and Artemis. The world's first children were unremarkably happy. To amuse their mother--with whom they were all passionately in love--they invented language, music, laughter--and many more useful and boisterous activities. One morning Persephone menstruated. That afternoon, Demeter's daughters gathered flowers to celebrate the loveliness of the event. A chariot thundered, then clattered into their midst. It was Hades, the middle-aged god of death, come to rape Persephone, come to carry her off to be his queen, to sit beside him in the realm of non-being below the earth, come to commit the first act of violence earth's children had ever known.

. . . Thus (Persephone's children) discovered that in shame and sorrow childhood ends, and that nothing remains the same.

Persephone's sisters came home without her. Demeter raged and wept. Her bones seemed to shrink, her cheeks became wrinkled. She bound up her hair and turned wanderer, but could not find her eldest daughter anywhere on earth. Finally the sun spoke and told Demeter what had happened, that her daughter was married and a queen. He counseled her:

"Why mourn the natural fate of daughters--to leave their mothers' home, to lose their virginity, to marry, and to give birth to children"?

Demeter was grieved beyond and before reasoning. remembering an oracle's prophecy of a splitting, a scattering, and an exile, she said to the sun:

"Yea, if that be the natural fate of daughters, let all mankind perish. Let there be no crops, no grain, no corn, if this maiden is not returned to me."

Because Demeter was a powerful goddess, her wishes were commands and Persephone returned. Persephone still had to visit her husband once each year (in

Winter, when no crops could grow), but her union with him remained a barren one. Persephone was childless. Neither husband nor child--no stranger would ever claim her as his own. Persephone belonged to her mother. That was Demeter's gift to herself. (In those days, goddesses were still able to perform the miracle of "not choosing." They were both virgins and mothers, mortal and immortal, forever the same and forever changing.)

But "oh!" and "oh!" and "oh!" sighed Persephone's sisters after they had seen everything: the maiden's helplessness and rape, the young bride's childlessness, the mother's suffering--the terrifying simplicity and repetition of it all.

"Yes," they said of the maiden and the mother, "yes, she rules both beneath and above the earth, but she cannot keep us here any longer."

Psyche was the first to speak. "I am beautiful--some say more beautiful than all my sisters, and still no man claims me as his wife."

"Sisters! I am longing for love. I am lonely and frightened in our mother's house. I wish a husband--with strong and handsome eyes--and I wish to have a child."

Athena spoke next: "I am not beautiful--and care not for such things. (She was in fact exceedingly beautiful, but was very tall--even for the daughter of a goddess.) "Sisters! My childhood is over and must be relived. I wish to be born again--and of man. I wish to plot the clash of heroes from afar, dressed in the finest armor, moved by the finest wisdom. I wish for my own wholeness and not for children or a husband."

Artemis spoke last. (She too was tall, and of a darker complexion than her sisters.) "Sisters! Perhaps I wish for the impossible and will have to wander even farther than our mother did in search of it. I, too, want heroic clashes and great deeds. But I also want love and children. My head aches with visions of swords and altars, dazzling cities, and beautiful maidens. There is a music in my ears strange to our mother's house."

Well, as this conversation is common knowledge among schoolgirls, we know what each sister arranged for herself.

P Psyche went home to plead for a husband. Demeter and Persephone were astounded by such a strange desire, yet they knew it must be satisfied. In secrecy, for such a thing had never before happened, Psyche was married to Eros--to Love himself, to Aphrodite's son. Psyche lived alone with her husband, in a splendid palace, set high on a nameless mountain. Silent, invisible servants brought her whatever she wished. At night, and only at night, Love came to visit; Psyche's husband--but she didn't know who he was or what he looked like. Love had warned her never to look at him, but to love him in darkness. One midnight, after he had fallen asleep, Psyche lit a small oil lamp for a single, guilty look--and woke Love, who fled the palace. Miserable and frightened, Psyche set out to find him. After many near perilous failures, Love finally rescued his

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unhappy wife. He brought her to Heaven to live in an even more splendid palace. There, surrounded by the immortals, Psyche, Love, and their daughter, Pleasure, lived happily forever after--the first heavenly Holy Family.

Athena never returned to her mother's house. Instead, she went straight to Zeus, the god of gods, and proposed a bargain much to his vain and clever liking: to be re-born of him. She asked him to become her mother. And so Athena became tw^oiceborn, the second time of man. She emerged fully grown from Zeus's head, wearing the armor she so desired. Like Persephone, Athena remained childless and fiercely loyal to her one parent. Unlike Persephone, Athena was never raped, abducted, or mad a king's unwilling queen. She needed no rescuing. If there was rescuing to do, Athena herself would do it. Indeed, she rescued many a male hero, helped him slay hideous monsters, capture unobtainable prizes, win great wars, and destroy ancient cities. This stately daughter of Demeter seemed to have no memory of her earthly and female origins. She never understood why certain men still insisted on sacrificing to her before planting and afterharvesting. She smiled to herself. Didn't they know it was a strange tribute to one who had chosen her own parent--and, in so doing, had stopped turning on the wheel of repetition?

Artemis, the youngest of Demeter's daughters, returned to her mother's house. First she had Demeter consecrate her to the moon, so that no matter how far she'd have to wander, she would never forget, never betray her origins. That done, Artemis quickly perfected the arts of hunting and riding and warfare, of plant healing and midwifery. Then, with the moon for guide, she left to found a city--no it was a tribe--no it was a culture, the likes of which the world had never known. Every woman in it was a soldier and a mother, tears were as common as physical bravery, marriage was scorned, rape unthinkable, and the love of young girls praised in poems written by even the most hardened war veterans. Artemis herself had many female lovers, and many daughters, each of whom founded other Amazon cities in Africa, in South America, and elsewhere in Asia.

Goddesses never die. They slip in and out of the world's cities, in and out of our dreams, century after century, answering to different names, dressed differently, perhaps even digguised, perhaps idle and unemployed, their official altars abandoned, their temples feared or simply forgotten. What of Demeter and her four daughters?

Demeter, the goddess of life, and Persephone, her ghostly, embryonic maiden-daughter, were for a long time celebrated in elaborate secret ceremonies by the most sophisticated of the ancients, and more openly by everyone else. But somehow--no one really knows why--such celebrations of mothers and daughters certainly ceased. That which had gone before could no longer be worshiped. Fierce prophets proclaimed martial law against the past. Even fiercer prophets proclaimed martial law against the present. Monotheism changed the fate of mortals and immortals alike.

The picture of goddess/models is very distorted in the world today. Psyche "in love with love, in love with marriage" has become enshrined as the Virgin Mary. The more powerful goddesses, Artemis and Athena are forgotten. Part of the womans movement's

cultural thrust is the resurrection of Artemis as a model for women to follow. We are saying to women, "Look - you have more choices in life. You don't have to be domestic and soft. Femininity includes fierceness and strength as well as ~~tenderness~~ tenderness and softness. And, if you can't find a male companion to rejoice in your strengths with you - Forget men. Other women can be tender, yet strong lovers as well as friends."

A step beyond Chesler's description of the fate of the Greek goddesses is the thesis of Elizabeth Davis in The First Sex. Davis describes the Jewish and Christian religions and also the Eastern religions as patriarchal overthrows of earlier matriarchal religions and civilizations. In her view, the first gods were female--mother goddesses--it was natural that the creative principle was seen as female(since all new life in this world comes from females in the mystery of birth). And, the civilizations were ruled by women who built the cities and sailed the seas. The men who were not meek enough to abide feminine rule were exiled and later banded together and overthrew the cities the women had built. The men substituted male gods for the earlier mother god worship, and they subject women to their rule. In other words, it wasn't always like it is today!

Today, the models we get from the world around us almost consistently put women in subordinate positions to men and give negative ideas about our sexuality. Advertising and T.V. imply that only women with a certain kind of figure, face, and hair are beautiful--also women with no smell and no body hair who have spent an hour putting on make-up. The aim of make-up is to take away individual coloring and appearance and substitute an ideal kind of feminine beauty.(When I became active in the women's movement my perception of beauty in women changed to appreciating much more subtle physical things.) Often the ideal is to radiate innocence and childlike happiness--for every woman to seem an untouched virgin. After all what man wants a woman who has "been around" too much.

In movies and T.V. the woman who gets the man is the one who is focused on the man, not on herself and her own goals and plans. Fulfillment usually comes to women through men.

Another theme all around us is the faithful wife--the good woman vs. the bad fallen woman. The biblical archetypes are the Virgin Mary vs. Mary Magdalen and Eve; the virgin vs. the fallen woman. This idea comes to us in many ways--from the "men want to marry virgins; theme to the "she looks cheap" idea.

The double standard is another part of social conditioning--men are seen as more aggressive and independent and are allowed to form casual sexual liaisons. In fact men are allowed to have and express sexual feelings including rape which often goes unpunished by the courts because our patriarchal society worships virility. On the other hand, women are seen as loose sluts if they have a free sexuality. Everyone in the U.S. grows up with the idea that men are supposed to be more aggressive and independent than women. If a man doesn't find himself to be more aggressive and independent than women, he worries. If a young woman finds that she is as aggressive as the men around her, she feels a little uneasy about it. These differences spring from the role training we are given. Men must be tough and go out into the tough business world and make it. Women stay at home and take care of the children and their men.

Of course this ethic extends to sexual relationships. Men are the aggressors in sex--a well known "fact". If a woman acts too eager, she often wonders if she is being wanton. Husbands wonder sometimes too. Not to mention what the wife must think of herself if she has an "affair". The moral question of whether or not it's alright to sleep with whoever you want is a very painful one for many of us in the U.S.

I spent a summer jumping out of bed with a lover and going to Mass, then coming back and crying over the conflict. And, I spent several years tormented by the moral question "Is it alright?" 2 Years that my mind could

more useful.

There is a conflicting view of sex which to some extent I held at the same time that I was a Catholic. This is the career-girl view of sex. Sexiness is one of the marketable aspects of oneself that one exploits to add to one's desirability in the marriage market. As Fromm in The Art of Loving has described--one amasses all the good attributes one can in order to exchange for a mate with the best qualities one can find. There's not much thought of loving. It's mostly an exchange of goods.

I was taught by the society around me to be as sexy as possible. I practiced sexy movements and expressions. I was one of those coy fems who believed that if "you wanted to make him more of a man, you should be more of a woman." Later other ethical questions about sex came up. --What was it for anyway?

Only when in love?

Something you had to do when you got horny†s?

An enjoyable exciting experience whenever you got turned on by someone?

And still later in life.

An expression of closeness between friends and lovers?

A means of spiritual and psychic union that should be reserved for times that it feels right spiritually?

The psychic aspect of sexuality shouldn't be ignored. Several women I know have gotten strong inward messages that something was wrong when by the outward signs, the person they were with seemed to be a sensitive good person. One friend experienced herself as a female spirit fleeing from a male spirit who was attractive but trying to trap her. Another friend felt that her head was away from her body--on the ceiling while in the middle of fucking. Experiences like this can be our subconscious trying to tell us something our conscious mind hasn't realized.

To return to different views of sexuality, I'd like to explore more into the 'sex as market value' idea. In our pluralistic country while millions suffer over religious questions of sexuality other millions have no religion to consider when confronting sex. If materialistic things

are all one considers, then sex can be just another activity like making money. In the career girl view of Helen Gurley Brown in Sex and the Single Girl, and the sexology of J in the Sensuous Woman, one builds up ones performance and capacity to enjoy sex to exchange with a partner with the same abilities. Considerations of psychic or spiritual union would seem irrelevant, absurd, or a wierd, kooky kind of icing on the sexual cake.

In the male world, the opinions of sexuality get pretty gross. Walk down the city-light sex entertainment section of any city and see if you don't get a little nauseated by the pictures displayed in the girlie bar windows and the movie titles. To many men, women are "cunts" and best when they don't talk or intrude too much--although that's not the front the man puts on when he's on the make.

Our culture has degraded sex. Our cursewords are put downs of sex--Fuck-you, you bastard, bitch, cunt, whore, prick. Capitalism runs on the sexual sell.--Tease the poor frustrated folks with the promise of sexual fulfillment and by damn, they'll buy it; or it's an exciting pass time--"guess, who I made it with last night." Advertisements hit us below the belt by promising that if we buy the right kind of coffee our man will love us or they promise him that if he buys the right car or wears the right aftershave etc. he ^{can} ~~can~~ get a beautiful woman. In fact many men and some women substitute fast cars, motorcycles or the new male variation, ^{new} ~~some~~ automobiles for sensuality, loving relationships and sexual pleasure.

Sex is an ancient force that should be respected. Sex can be an act of worship--through touch and feeling we temporarily give up reason to return to our deeper self. Christianity with its intellectual sky god--just a voice--was a change from the gods of natural instincts to a god of rationalized self-control. The multiplicity of gods was reduced to one.

This is a male-reason over emotion ethic. In this worship of reason and control, we emphasize listening to our mind. We don't trust our emotions. We tend to divorce ourselves from our emotions which bind us to other people. In this state, the mind can go

down strange pathways like the cold-blooded murder of a nation of people, people who can play war games on computers with the lives of millions thought of in cold military strategies or like anthropologists who can go to the near east and recommend concentration camps as the best form of population control.

THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION IS NO JOKE FOR WOMEN

by Karen Lindsey

I'm not sure when the revolution began to hurt. In the early '60's I was in college, and I was in love. That part was no hassle. I wanted to sleep with the guy and I did, and sex was a new and wonderful world and we were happy and then we weren't so happy and then we broke up. So far okay--sad, but okay. But then I was on my own, and, like a lot of my friends, took the next logical step. Sex was fun and I was pretty and there were lots of nice guys around. So I slept with them and I dug it and they dug it and the Pill made it all okay. And it seemed to me that sex was a really lovely part of friendship.

I'm not sure when I discovered that it wasn't. Maybe when my friend Tina came to me crying because a guy she really liked--a heavy in our burgeoning campus SDS chapter--had asked her to sleep with him because, he explained, his girlfriend didn't want to till they got married and he respected that but he really wanted to get laid, so what was Tina's mind? Tina minded; in fact, she nearly had a breakdown over it. But then, Tina was a little hung up about those things.

Shortly after the Tina incident, while I was a member of SDS and going with another member (which gave me a sort of a one-of-the-fellows status with the other male members--I was hip and not hung up about sex so they could talk freely around me, but I was someone else's girl so I was off limits), I listened to the putdowns of one of the other woman members who wasn't sleeping with anybody. "The girl with the cast-iron clit," they called her, and I refused to acknowledge the queasy feeling in my stomach as I joined in their laughter. Well, it was her own fault, if she was going to be so square--what was the matter with her, anyhow?

I drifted out of politics and into miniskirts and between bouts of monogamy slept with lots of men and closed my ears to what I didn't want to hear. The men were my friends and sex was part of our friendship they assured me and I assured myself. But once or twice I found myself in situations where I wasn't up for a good time--where

I was unhappy and needed the kind of warmth and reassurance that didn't end up in fucking. And my good friends the lovers weren't there, or were there with such undisguised disdain for my needs that I fled to my real friends, invariably women, who gave me the warmth and

compassion and respect that I needed. And I began to realize that, far from being an integrated part of a relationship, my sexuality existed for these men solely as a function of their pleasure or fantasy. Some of them were simply out-and-out, old-fashioned, fuck-'em-and-forg-'em bastards. In a sense, they were the easiest to deal with. Harder to take were the ones who thought they really cared about me, because I'd lived up to some image they'd created. A favorite image, I came to realize, was the Lady Poet. Lady Poets live in ivory towers, and while they might write about human anguish they never experience it--at least not in any unlovely way. Lady poets are always dignified, but always very sensual. Lady Poets never get drunk or cry or beg for help.

Swinging Chick

A close runner-up to the Lady Poet was the Swinging Chick. To the mind that created the Swinging Chick, there were two kinds of relationships-- casual and serious. Needless to say, a Swinging Chick was casual, and that meant that you never intruded the reality of your needs onto the guy. That was the privilege of his "serious" lover. You used the word "friend" about each other, but you never made any of the demands of friendship.

While all this was coming to light, I began to perceive another level of men's sexuality. I had believed the old standards dead--women, like men, were sexual beings, and we could openly express our attraction. As I became more secure in my own sexuality, and more open about it, I discovered that there were definite rules in the sexual revolution, and that real aggressiveness in a woman was a bad breach of etiquette.

You had to give out signals, but you had to wait for the man to make the "first move," and you had to be a little coy so he could have the fun of breaking down your resistance by the power of his masculine charm.

At first I couldn't believe this was happening. Sex was beautiful and free, and there were no more rules, I kept telling myself. And the more I protested, the more I saw what I had been doing for the past four years -- working constantly and obviously to tread the line between the two cardinal sins of frigidity and nymphomania. No one admitted the existence of rules; to admit that would have negated the myth of freedom we were clinging to. And the rules varied from man to man; it was necessary to try to sense each man's rules, and at the way the rule was discovered was by its violation -- a sudden turnoff, a censorious attitude was the tipoff (never, of course, a direct confrontation, he could hardly accuse you of breaking a rule that wasn't there).

I began to feel nostalgic for the bad old days, when rules, if oppressive, were open and standardized and there was a clearcut system of rewards and punishments. Purity and marriage might be a drag, but they did offer a certain protection for the woman who toed the line.

"Some Coffee?"

Finally, I saw something happening to my own sexuality. I'd been pushing myself into being "free" --into sleeping with men I didn't give a damn about and sometimes wasn't even attracted to, because I'd gotten dependent on the notion of sex as fulfillment (and status). This realization had a dramatically immediate result. One night I lay there, suddenly aware that my body was having a great time while my mind was sitting back waiting for the whole thing to be over. The next morning we woke up, and my friend-for-the night reached a sleepy a out to me, I jumped up, chirruped "Well, how about some coffee?", kept up a merry stream of chatter all through breakfast, kissed him good bye, and didn't fuck for a year.

It took me most of that year to figure out what had happened. Why was I reacting the way I was, and where had the great dream of beautiful healthy, unfettered sex gone wrong?

I realized that the sexual revolution, like the structures it purported to overthrow, was based on myth. Part of the myth was that male sexuality, unlike female romanticism, was based on real, honest, animal lust, and that women have to learn to be as free as men and everything would be fine. But what I had seen in men was less earthy ~~power-tripp~~ animal appetite than very human power tripping.

The necessity for conquest, for challenge, strikes me as the major force in male sexual behavior, and if female "romanticism" has been ridiculed, it is at least a less ugly detour from simple sexual gratification than male power hunger is.

Furthermore, I began to doubt that Healthy sex would, in fact, be a simple animal act unencumbered by emotional commitments. That assumption, like so many "natural" arguments, leaves out the very real factor of human complexity. To begin with, while our animal appetites like eating or sleeping must be satisfied for our survival, the sexual appetite is notably different. Celibacy may be uncomfortable but its mortality rate is pretty low. Certainly sex is part of the instinct for race-survival, but human physiology even complicates that. Unlike other animals, neither male nor female humans confine their passions to the female's fertile period. And if sex were only a question of physical release, I wonder why we haven't given up bothering with other people and confined ourselves to masturbation--simple, physical release without the hassle of dealing with a person who's bound to make some demand or another.

Human beings have other than physical needs, and I wonder if the most desolating trip that male culture has laid on all of us isn't its attempt to rigidly divide the areas of human need. I think we have denied ourselves something vital in the effort to divorce the most intimately shared physical experience from our emotional intimacies. I think our natures demand that there be at least some aspect of love in our sex, some aspect of sexuality in our love. We show affection by kisses, comfort by embraces: even the most severely masculine mores leave room for friendship to be expressed by handclaps or slaps on the back. And yet we allow the most intense expression of

physical contact little emotional import. It doesn't quite make sense.

Finally, whatever our "natural" sexuality may be, we have to deal with the fact that we have been conditioned by an environment that manipulates and exploits sexuality. The best we can do is try to make a real assessment of our own and each other's needs, and try to struggle out of the more oppressive aspects of our sexuality. I think women are in a better position to do this than men; we've always been forced to integrate our sexual and emotional needs and, for whatever dependencies that has bred in us, we don't have the power-ethic to contend with to the same degree that men have.

Male mythology has demanded of men that their sexuality be a function of their control over women, and they have to struggle out of that component of their sexuality. God help them. And God help those of us who still have some need for them. It's going to be a hard struggle. But until men change, the sexual revolution is just another ugly, dirty joke, and the women aren't laughing.

NOTES FROM "THE DIALECTIC OF SEX"
By Shulamith Firestone

Chapter 6 - LOVE

For love, perhaps even more than childbearing, is the pivot of women's oppression today.

The tired question "What were women doing while men created masterpieces?" deserves more than the obvious reply: Women were barred from culture, exploited in their role of mother. Or its reverse: Women had no need for paintings since they created children. Love is tied to culture in much deeper ways than that. Men were thinking, writing, and creating, because women were pouring their energy into those men; women are not creating culture because they are preoccupied with love.

How does this phenomenon "love" operate? Contrary to popular opinion, love is not altruistic. The initial attraction is based on curious admiration (more often today, envy and resentment) for the self-possession, the integrated unity, of the other and a wish to become of the Self in some way (today, read: intrude or take over), to become important to that psychic balance. The self-containment of the other creates desire (read: a challenge); admiration (envy) of the other becomes a wish to incorporate (possess) its qualities. A clash of selves follows in which the individual attempts to fight off the growing hold over him of the other. Love is the final opening up to (or, surrender to the dominion of) the other. The lover demonstrates to the beloved how he himself would like to be treated. ("I tried so hard to make him fall in love with me that I fell in love with him myself.") Thus love is the height of selfishness: the self attempts to enrich itself through the absorption of another being. Love is being psychically wide-open to another. It is a situation of total emotional vulnerability. Therefore it must be not only the incorporation of the other, but an exchange of selves. Anything short of a mutual exchange will hurt one or the other party.

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There is nothing inherently destructive about this process. A little healthy selfishness would be a refreshing change. Love between two equals would be an enrichment, each enlarging himself through the other: instead of being one, locked in the cell of himself with only his own experience and view, he could participate in the existence of another - an extra window on the world. This accounts for the bliss that successful lovers experience: Lovers are temporarily freed from the burden of isolation that every individual bears.

Theodor Reik sees that it is preceded by dissatisfaction with oneself, a yearning for ego and the ego-ideal; That the bliss love produces is due to the resolution of this tension by the substitution, in place of one's own ego-ideal, of the other; And finally that love fades "because the other can't live up to your high ego-ideal any more than you could, and the judgement will be the harsher the higher are the claims on oneself".

We have seen that love demands a mutual vulnerability or it turns destructive: the destructive effects of love occur only in a context of inequality. But because sexual inequality has remained a constant - however its degree may have varied - the corruption "romantic" love became characteristic of love between the sexes.

Romantic idealization is partially responsible, at least on the part of men, for a peculiar characteristic of "Falling" in love: the change takes place in the lover almost independently of the character of the love object. Occasionally the lover, though beside himself, sees with another rational part of his faculties that, objectively speaking, the one he loves isn't worth all this blind devotion; but he is helpless to act on this, "a slave to love".

A man must idealize one woman over the rest in order to justify his descent to a lower caste.

Thus "falling in love" is no more than the process of alteration of male vision-through idealization, mystification, glorification-that renders void the woman's class

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inferiority.

However, the woman knows that this idealization, which she works so hard to produce, is a lie, and that it is only a matter of time before he "sees through her." Her life is hell, vacillating between an all-consuming need for male love and approval to raise her from her class subjection, to persistent feelings of inauthenticity when she does achieve his love. Thus her whole identity hangs in the balance of her love life. She is allowed to love herself only if a man finds her worthy of love.

Reik:

"Women: Later on he called me a sweet girl.....I didn't answer...what could I say?... but I knew I was not a sweet girl at all and that he sees me as someone I'm not."

"Men: (for further illustration, see Screw) It's not true that only the external appearance of a woman matters. The underwear is also important."

It's not difficult to make it with a girl. What's difficult is to make an end of it.

The girl asked me whether I cared for her mind. I was tempted to answer I cared more for her behind.

"Are you going already?" she said when she opened her eyes. It was a bedroom cliché whether I left after an hour or after two days.

Perhaps it's necessary to fool the woman and to pretend you love her. But why should I fool myself?

When she is sick, she turns me off. But when I'm sick she feels sorry for me and is more affectionate than usual.

It is not enough for my wife that I have to hear her talking all the time-blah, blah,blah. She also expects me to hear what she is saying.

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Being unable to love is hell. This is the way it proceeds: as soon as the man feels any pressure from the other partner to commit himself, he panics and may react in one of several ways:

(1) He may rush out and screw ten other women to prove that the first woman has no hold over him. If she accepts this, he may continue to see her on this basis. The other women verify his (false) freedom; periodic arguments about them keep his panic at bay. But the women are a paper tiger, for nothing very deep could be happening with them anyway: he is balancing them against each other so that none of them can get much of him. Many smart women, recognizing this to be only a safety valve on their man's anxiety, give him "a long leash". For the real issue under all the fights about other women is that the man is unable to commit himself.

(2) He may consistently exhibit unpredictable behavior, standing her up frequently, being indefinite about the next date, telling her that "my work comes first," or offering a variety of other excuses. That is, though he senses her anxiety as a steady reminder that he is still free, that the door is not entirely closed.

(3) When he is forced into (an uneasy) commitment, he makes her pay for it: by ogling other women in her presence, by comparing her unfavorably to past girlfriends or movie stars, by snide reminders in front of friends that she is his "ball and chain," by calling her a "nag", a "bitch," "a shrew," or by suggesting that if he were only a bachelor he would be a lot better off. His ambivalence about women's "inferiority" comes out: by being committed to one, he has somehow made the hated female identification, which he now must repeatedly deny if he is to maintain his self-respect in the (male) community. This steady derogation is not entirely put on: for in fact every other girl suddenly does look a lot better, he can't help

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feeling he has missed something-and, naturally, his woman is to blame. For he has never given up the search for the ideal; she has forced him to resign from it. Probably he will go to his grave feeling cheated, never realizing that there isn't much difference between one woman and the other, that it is the loving that creates the difference.

The question that remains for every normal male is, then, how do I get someone to love me without her demanding an equal commitment in return?

Women's "clinging" behavior is required by the objective social situation. The female response to such a situation of male hysteria at any prospect of mutual commitment was the development of subtle methods of manipulation, to force as much commitment as could be forced from men. Over the centuries strategies have been devised , tested, and passed on from mother to daughter in secret ~~tete-à-tetes~~ ^{atetes}, passed around at "kaffee-klatsches" ("I never understand what it is women spend so much time talking about!"), or, in recent times, via the telephone. These are not trivial gossip sessions at all (as women prefer men to believe), but desperate strategies for survival. More real brilliance goes into one one-hour coed telephone dialogue about men than into that same coed's four years of college study, or for that matter, than into most male political maneuvers. It is no wonder, then, that even the few women without "family obligations" always arrive exhausted at the starting line of any serious endeavor. It takes one's major energy for the best portion of one's creative years to "make a good catch," and a good part of the rest of one's life to "hold" that catch. (" To be in love can be a full-time job for a woman, like that of a profession for a man.") Women who choose to drop out of this race are choosing a life without love, something that, as we have seen, most men don't have the courage to do.

In addition, the continued economic dependence of women makes a situation of healthy

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love between equals impossible. Women today still live under a system of patronage: With few exceptions, they have the choice, not between either freedom or marriage, but between being either public or private property. Women who merge with a member of the ruling class can at least hope that some of his privilege will, so to speak, rub off. But women without men are in the same situation as orphans: they are a helpless sub-class lacking the protection of the powerful. This is the antithesis of freedom when they are still (negatively) defined by a class situation: for now they are in a situation of magnified vulnerability. To participate in one's subjection by choosing one's master often gives the illusion of free choice; but in reality a woman is never free to choose love without external motivations. For her at the present time, the two things, love and status, must remain inextricably intertwined.

Now assuming that a woman does not lose sight of these fundamental factors of her condition, when she loves, she will never be able to love gratuitously, but only in exchange for security:

(1) the emotional security which, we have seen, she is justified in demanding.

(2) the emotional identity which she should be able to find through work and recognition, but which she is denied - thus forcing her to seek her definition through a man.

(3) the economic class security that, in this society, is attached to her ability to "hook" a man.

Two of these three demands are invalid conditions for love, but are imposed on it, weighing it down.

Thus, in their precarious political situation, women can't afford the luxury of spontaneous love. It is much too dangerous. The love and approval of men is all-important.

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To love thoughtlessly, before one has ensured return commitment, would endanger that approval.

Now what happens after she has finally hooked her man, after he has fallen in love with her and will do anything? She has a new set of problems. Now she can release the vise, open her net, and examine what she has caught. Usually she is disappointed. It is nothing she would have bothered with were she a man. It is usually way below her level. (Check this out sometime: Talk to a few of those mousy wives.) "He may be a poor thing, but at least I've got a man of my own" is usually more the way she feels.

Chapter 7 - The Culture of Romance

So far we have not distinguished "romance" from love. For there are no two kinds of love, one healthy (dull) and one not (painful) ("My dear, what you need is a mature love relationship. Get over this romantic nonsense."), but only less-than-love or daily agony. When love takes place in a power context, everyone's "love life" must be affected. Because power and love don't make it together.

So when we talk about romantic love we mean love corrupted by its power context - the sex class system - into a diseased form of love that then in turn reinforces this sex class system. We have seen that the psychological dependence of women upon men is created by continuing real economic and social oppression. However, in the modern world the economic and social bases of the oppression are no longer alone enough to maintain it. So the apparatus of romanticism is hauled in. (Looks like we'll have to help her out, Boys!)

Romanticism is a cultural tool of male power to keep women from knowing their condition. It is especially needed - and therefore strongest - in Western countries with the highest rate of industrialization. Today, with technology enabling women to break out of their roles for good - it was a near miss in the early twentieth century - romanticism is at an all-time high.

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(1) Eroticism. A prime component of romanticism is eroticism. All animal needs (the affection of a kitten that has never seen heat) for love and warmth are channeled into genital sex: people must never touch others of the same sex, and many touch those of the opposite sex only when preparing for a genital sexual encounter ("a pass"). Isolation from others makes people starved for physical affection; and if the only kind they can get is genital sex, that's soon all they crave. In this state of hypersensitivity the least sensual stimulus produces an exaggerated effect, enough to inspire everything from schools of master painting to rock and roll. Thus eroticism is the concentration of sexuality - often into highly-charged objects ("Chantilly Lace") - signifying the displacement of other social/affection needs onto sex. To be plain old needy-for-affection makes one a "drip", to need a kiss is embarrassing, unless it is an erotic kiss; only "sex" is O.K., in fact it proves one's mettle. Virility and sexual performance become confused with social worth.

The only exception to this concentration of all emotional needs into erotic relationships is the (sometimes) affection within the family. But here too, unless they are "his" children, a man can no more express affection for children than he can for women. Thus his affection for the young is also a trap to saddle him into the marriage structure, reinforcing the patriarchal system.

"The Sex Privatization of Women. Eroticism is only the topmost layer of the romanticism that reinforces female inferiority. As with any lower class, group awareness must be deadened to keep them from rebelling. In this case, because the distinguishing characteristic of women's exploitation as a class is sexual, a special means must be found to make them unaware that they are considered all alike sexually ("cunts"). Perhaps when a man marries he chooses from this undistinguishable lot with care, for as we have seen, he holds a special high place in his mental reserve for "The One," by virtue of her close association with himself; but in

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general he can't tell the difference between chicks (Blondes, Brunettes, Redheads)* And he likes it that way. ("A wiggle in your walk, a giggle in your talk, THAT'S WHAT I LIKE!") When a man believes all women are alike, but wants to keep women from guessing, what does he do? He keeps his beliefs to himself, and pretends, to allay her suspicions, that what she has in common with other women is precisely what makes her different. Thus her sexuality eventually becomes synonymous with her individuality. The sex privatization of women is the process whereby women are blinded to their generality as a class which renders them invisible as individuals to the male eye. Is not that strange Mrs. Lady next to the President in his entourage reminiscent of the discreet black servant at White House functions?

The process is insidious: When a man exclaims, "I love Blondes!" all the secretaries in the vicinity sit up; they take it personally because they have been sex-privatized. The blonde one feels personally complimented because she has come to measure her worth through the physical attribute you could name is shared by many others, that these are accidental attributes not of her own creation, that her sexuality is shared by half of humanity. But in an authentic recognition of her individuality, her blondness would be loved, but in a different way: she would be loved first as an irreplaceable totality, and then her blondness would be loved as one of the characteristics of that totality.

The apparatus of sex privatization is so sophisticated that it may take years to detect if detectable at all. It explains many puzzling traits of female psychology that take such form

as: , Women who are personally complimented by compliments to their sex, ie, "Hats off to the Little Woman!"

Women who are not insulted when addressed regularly and impersonally as Dear, Honey, Sweetie, Sugar, Kitten, Darling, Angel, Queen, Princess, Doll, Woman.

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Women who are secretly flattered to have asses pinched in Rome.
(Much wiser to count the number of times other girls' asses are pinched.)

The joys of "Prickteasing" (generalized male horniness taken as a sign of personal value and desirability.)

The "Clotheshorse" phenomenon. (Women, denied legitimate outlets for expression of their individuality, "express" themselves physically as in (I want to see something different.)

These are only some of the reactions to the sex privatization process, the confusion of one's sexuality with one's individuality. The process is so effective that most women have come to believe seriously that the world needs their particular sexual contributions to go on. (She thinks her pussy is made of gold.) But the love songs would still be written without them.

Women may be duped, but men are quite conscious of this as a valuable manipulative technique. That is why they go to great pains to avoid talking about women in front of them ("not in front of a lady") - it would give their game away. To overhear a bull session is traumatic to a woman: So all this time she has been considered only "ass," "meat," "twat," or "stuff," to be gotten a "piece of," "that bitch," or "this broad," to be tricked out of money or sex or love! To understand finally that she is no better than other women but completely indistinguishable comes not just as a blow but as a total annihilation.

Women, because social recognition is granted only for a false individuality, are kept from developing the tough individuality that would enable breaking through such a ruse. If one's existence in its generality is the only thing acknowledged, why go to the trouble of developing real character? It is much less hassle to "light up the room with a smile" - until that day when the "chick" graduates to "old bag" to find that her smile is no longer "inimitable."

"The Beauty Ideal". Every society has promoted a certain ideal of beauty over all others. What that ideal is is unimportant, for any ideal leaves the majority out; ideals, by

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definition, are modeled on rare qualities. For example, in American, the present fashion vogue of French models, or the erotic ideal Voluptuous Blonde are modeled on qualities are indeed: few Americans are of French birth, most don't look French and never will (and besides they eat too much); voluptuous brunettes can bleach their hair (as did Marilyn Monroe, the sex queen herself), but blondes can't develop curves at will - and most of them, being Anglo-Saxon, simply aren't built like that. If and when, by artificial methods, the majority can squeeze into the ideal, the ideal changes. If it were attainable, what good would it be?

For the exclusivity of the beauty ideal serves a clear political function. Someone - most women - will be left out. And left scrambling, because as we have seen, women have been allowed to achieve individuality only through their appearance - looks being defined as "good" not out of love for the bearer, but because of her more or less successful approximation to an external standard.

Thus women become more and more look-alike. But at the same time they are expected to express their individuality through their physical appearance. Thus they are kept coming and going, at one and the same time trying to express their similarity and their uniqueness. The demands of Sex Privatization contradict the demands of the Beauty Ideal, causing the severe feminine neurosis about personal appearance.

But this conflict itself has an important political function. When women begin to look more and more alike, distinguished only by the degree to which they differ from a paper ideal, they can be more easily stereotyped as a class: They look alike, they think alike, and even worse, they are so stupid they believe they are not alike.

These are some of the major components of the cultural apparatus, romanticism, which, with the weakening of natural limitations on women, keep sex oppression going strong.

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Images' become extensions of oneself; it gets hard to distinguish the real person from his latest image, if indeed, the Person Underneath hasn't evaporated altogether. Arnie, the kid who sat in back of you in the sixth grade, picking his nose and cracking jokes, the one who had a crook in his left shoulder, is lost under successive layers of adopted images: the High School Comedian, the Campus Rebel, James Bond, the Salem Springtime Lover, and so on, each image hitting new highs of sophistication until the person himself doesn't know who he is. Moreover, he deals with others through this image-extension (Boy-Image meets Girl-Image and consummates Image-Romance). Even if a woman could get beneath this intricate image facade - and it would take months, even years, of a painful, almost theraputic relationship - she would be met not with gratitude that she had (painfully) loved the man for his real self, but with shocked repulsion and terror that she had found him out. What he wants instead is the Pepsi-Cola Girl, to smile pleasantly to his Johnny Walker Red in front of a ski-lodge fire.

Woman is not only an Image, she is the Image of Sex Appeal. The stereotyping of women expands: now there is no longer the excuse of ignorance. Every woman is constantly and explicitly informed on how to "improve" what nature gave her, where to buy the products to do it with, and how to count the calories she should never have eaten - indeed, the ugly woman is now so nearly extinct even she is fast becoming "exotic". The competition becomes frantic, because everyone is now plugged into the same circuit. The current beauty ideal becomes all-pervasive (Blondes have more fun...).

And eroticism becomes erotomania. Stimulated to the limit, it has reached an epidemic level unequalled in history. From every magazine cover, film screen, TV tube, subway sign, jump breasts, legs, shoulders, thighs. Men walk about in a state of constant sexual excitement.

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Even with the best of intentions, it is difficult to focus on anything else. This bombardment of the senses, in turn, escalates sexual provocation still further: ordinary means of arousal have lost all effect.

One of the internal contradictions of this highly effective propaganda system is to expose to men as well as women the stereotyping process women undergo. Though the idea was to better acquaint women with their feminine role, men who turn on the TV are also treated to the latest in tummy-control, falso eyelashes, and floor waxes (Does she... or doesn't she?). Such a crosscurrent of sexual tease and expose" would be enough to make any man hate women, if he didn't already.

Thus the extension of romanticism through modern media enormously magnified its effects. If before culture maintained male supremacy through Eroticism, Sex Privatization, and the Beauty Ideal, these cultural processes are now almost too effectively carried out: the media are guilty of "overkill." The regeneration of the women's movement at this moment in history may be due to a backfiring, - an internal contradiction of our modern cultural indoctrination system. For in its amplification of sex indoctrination, the media have unconsciously exposed the degredation of "femininity".

In conclusion, I want to add a note about the special difficulties of attacking the sex class system through its means of cultural indoctrination. Sex objects are beautiful. An attack on them can be confused with an attack on beauty itself. Feminists need not get so pious in their efforts that they must flatly deny the beauty of the face on the cover of Vogue. For this is not the point. The real question is: is the face beautiful in a human way - does it allow for growth and flux and decay, does it express negative as well as positive emotions - does it fall apart without artificial props - or does it falsely imitate the very different beauty of an inanimate object, like wood trying to be metal?

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To attack eroticism creates similar problems. Eroticism is exciting. No one wants to get rid of it. Life would be a drab and routine affair without at least that spark. That's just the point. Why has all joy and excitement been concentrated, driven into one narrow, difficult-to-find alley of human experience, and all the rest laid waste? When we demand the elimination of eroticism, we mean not the elimination of sexual joy and excitement but its rediffusion over - there's plenty to go around, it increases with use - the spectrum of our lives.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN & WOMEN

Women live for their relationships and expect them to fulfill their entire lives.

Relationships are more incidental to men's lives. Men often have strong interests in their work, career and hobbies or sports. Women don't take themselves seriously in their work or outside interests and don't look to them for as much fulfillment as men do. Women are really expecting the "right" relationship to make their lives exciting and fulfilling.

Women tend to think more about their feelings and the psychological nuances of their and other peoples behavior than men do. Men try to make themselves strong and invulnerable by more often ignoring unpleasant feelings of weakness or depression. They aren't expecting to get fulfilled by sharing these kinds of feelings with another person as women do. Relationships are more incidental to men's lives than to women's lives.

If you listen to men's conversations, you will often find that they are about material objects rather than psychological relationships. Men talk about cars, boats, motorcycles, sports, their work, sex, etc. Women talk about their homes and their feelings, relationships and the psychological meaning behind peoples actions and words and are often too delicate to talk about sex. In some places, there stereotypes are beginning to change as both men and women feel fed up with the constricting roles the society has carved out for them.

These differences come from the different roles in society men and women are expected to play. Women are trained to be mothers and wives--therefore warm, nurturing, supportive. Men are trained to be tough and aggressive so they will succeed in their careers. If you're male and weak and cry alot it will be hard for you to keep a job which calls for pushiness and aggressiveness.

Often feeling weak means that you feel vulnerable--If you feel totally invulnerable it's impossible to get close to others which usually means a sharing of vulnerabilities.

Feeling depressed often means you don't feel like you have control over your life which in this society we don't. So at least realizing that is perhaps a first step toward doing something about it.

One of the historical weapons women have used in their fight for equality has been contracts and legal weapons. Alternate marriage contracts have been used by many people to state what they intend by marriage as ~~for~~ opposed to what the state intends by legal marriage. Henry Blackwell the famous abolitionist and Lucy Stone abolitionist and early feminist wrote their own marriage contract so that the wife would not be legally unequal to the husband. Lucy Stone led the fight for women to be able to keep their own name after marriage. Mary Wallstonecraft and early English feminist is also famous for having a clear understanding with her husband in which she was equal and not subordinate. The following is a contract written by a present day feminist to clarify the terms and obligations in her relationship.

PREAMBLE

This is an agreement between _____ and _____ to co-habitate for one year beginning July 1, 1973. This contract is renewable after one year, open for revision at any time, and must be scheduled for revision every six months.

FEMINIST MARRIAGE CONTRACT

INTENT OF THE CONTRACT

Realizing we cannot predict our relationship, we will attempt to specify the terms of our understanding. This document has been drawn for the purpose of clearly expressing rights, responsibility, limitations, and expectations that will occur in the course of living together. We are trying to avoid over-romanticizing our affection, thereby clouding important issues and needs.

The contract provides a mechanism for (1) defining and meeting individual needs, (2) knowing what demands we can fairly make upon each other, (3) understanding the consequences for our actions, (4) creating a system of accountability to each other. The intent of the contract is to develop mutual commitment to the relationship by agreeing on the important issues and methods of working out problems. It is hoped that a formal, written agreement will provide maximum security, as well as encouraging growth and freedom. We want a relationship which will not necessitate traditional sex roles; we want honesty, security, and a good communication.

We value our affection, mutual support, security/stability, and sex life. Therefore, we will commit ourselves to preserve and nurture the relationship. We will try to maintain and grow in the relationship for at least one year.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM:

Realizing that the strength of any relationship is largely dependent on communication, we want to insure good communication. The spirit of the relationship is one of honesty and

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openness. With these factors in mind, we agree to (1) practice mutual and self-examination by (a) expressing and dealing with feelings we tend to repress or discount (eg. bottling up small things that irritate us) (b) trying to understand traditional sex roles and class behavior and breaking the pattern by confrontation and support. (2) setting aside a block of time for rap sessions dealing with the problems in the relationship. This session should be held at least twice a month in the beginning and once a week after the first three months. (3) A monthly meeting for examination of the communication process. If a communication blockage occurs, one has the right to request the other to find assistance in coping with the situation. Because of ideological and intellectual viewpoints, the orientation and type of therapy must be discussed and agreed to by both partners.

EXPECTATIONS:

The following is our Bill of Rights, which outlines our rights, expectations, and limitations within the relationship.

I - FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL or RIGHT TO SOVEREIGNTY. Important, the right of sovereignty encourages individual and mutual growth. The following are included in this right. (A) Privacy (B) Free space and time to pursue one's interests. (Separate one week vacation) Concerning an absence up to a month, mutual agreement is not necessary unless the absence has a major affect on the others plans. (C) outside friendships and sexual relationships. Monogamy within the partnership is neither institutionalized or encouraged. Once the primary importance of the partnership has been replaced by an outside relationship, the other party must be informed as to her/his position. (d) Personal expression eg. dressing for oneself and not your partner.

II - CLEAR COMMUNICATION PATTERNS:

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Such as (A) speaking in such a manner as to be clearly heard and understood (no mumbling) (B) respectfully listening, not interpreting or dominating the conversation, (C) mutually, accepted middle class forms of communication, ie politeness, no insulting comments. This is intended to limit destructive character degradation and not to limit personal expression.

III- FRIENDSHIP WITH PARTNER: The other party will be expected to provide the qualities of a friend. Those qualities include (A) agreement on basic principles (B) support and comfort (C) trust and confidentiality (D) companionship.

IV-HONEST AND MUTUAL CONSENT IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY: We th~~at~~orize that sex should be simultaneous. ~~Our own indulgence,~~ We encourage individual restraint in regard to our seductive tendencies, to keep sexual activity within reasonable bounds

V-FREEDOM FROM PHYSICAL VIOLENCE: Any act of violence causes immediate suspension or termination of the contract and relationship.

Honesty also extends into the sexual relationship. An open channel for talking about techniques and feeling must remain viable. The topic of sex will be included in our rap sessions.

Thou Shalt Hesitate Before Sleeping With Friends of Your Partner. Each individual case must be discussed jointly before sexual activity. Extra-partnership sex will not occur inside the household. (use someone else's bed) And every precaution against VD and pregnancy must be taken. No "pet" name calling particularly in public. Any other social behavior that is added at a later time, inevitably the code of etiquette will be expanded.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ON SEXUALITY AND POLITICS

To get married and be supported even though I was in love would be to sacrifice so much of my time and energy that I would not have enough for myself. No one gives something for nothing. If someone is providing economic support, they expect things. Parents expect loyalty, obedience and trust. Marriage traditionally was based on the same model.

The husband's psychological expectations in marriage are often considerable. Most men have been raised in a home where the atmosphere was that the wife fulfilled a lot of duties toward the husband. --Housework, often sexual fidelity and generally putting herself in a pleasant non-demanding role. Mother/wife is expected to be sympathetic, warm and loving. Father/husband is expected to be gruffer, harsher, more informed about the world in general. Even if a man makes a conscious decision later in life that men and women are equals, he still has a lot of previous conditioning about what he expects men/women husband/wife to be like.

In my life, the men I have been in relationships with have always demanded more of me than I felt able to demand of them emotionally. When they were angry or displeased my conditioning was to pour out friendliness, warmth and support. Often if I was slightly hurt and angry also I suppressed it in order to make them feel better. I never felt like the same reactions took over in them. If I showed anger and annoyance about an interaction we had had, often their response would be to get angry also. Then I would have to put out more energy to not break down in tears.

Another problem that takes a lot of energy and hinders my thinking when I am in a relationship with a man is that of validation or invalidation of my experience and perceptions. As Freud points out in Civilization and Its Discontents, the mind and the ego/

self concept in a person is in some ways a fragile thing. One of the major ways we have a mind or ego is by our memory of who we are, what we've done, and how people respond to us. But at times people get so estranged from their mind that they think that parts of their own bodies, perceptions, thoughts and feelings are alien and do not come from their ego; or they think things they see in the outside world actually come from ego but they don't realize it. Harding in The Way of All Women says that romantic love is a projection onto another person of unrealized parts of one's own subconscious. We love the other person not for himself, but for what our subconscious 'sees' in the other person that we lack.

Part of what happens perhaps in any demanding love relationship is that we deny another person's perceptions for our convenience. A says "you did that. You hurt me." B. says "But I meant this so I didn't actually do that."

At this point what do you do? Your mind and your emotions say one thing happened and has certain implications. Your lover who you trust says that at least the implications are not true. If you get contradicted a lot your mind gets confused and fuzzy. Men usually have more aggressive attitudes than women do about presenting contradictions like the above.

These sorts of problems lead me astray from the path I want to follow in life. For some years now I have had an intuitive feeling about the direction my life should follow.

(For validation of this type of feeling, I refer the reader to Carlos Casteneda's, Don Juan, A Yaqui Way of Knowledge, A separate Reality, and Journey to Ixtlan, Herman Hesse's, The Glass Bead Game, and Siddhartha; and the Master Game by deRopp. This direction involves less worrying and more doing and experimenting and maintaining joy in the face of disaster. My mind needs to be as far away from other pressures as it can get, both to find out what is really contained in it and to take facts from the outside world and think them through for myself.

I know that other women are interested in creating the same kind of world that I want. I feel that women intuitively understand what I try to get at more than men do, and I feel that women are more gentle with my mind than men.

I want to find out what kind of culture women can create together if they struggle to leave behind the all-pervasive conditioning of patriarchal values and habits. Can we build something that isn't based on competition but unity and mutual concern for one another's benefit? Our ideas of what human nature and male and female natures are like will change if we can leave behind society's many hoaxes which say "men are like this... women are naturally..."

Lesbianism

Lesbianism has been seen as an alternative to the traditional patterns of power in heterosexual relationships. Traditional meaning--independent, assertive, logical male vs nurturing, warm, soft, emotional, female. One of the important things that we are doing with lesbianism in the women's movement is restructuring ourselves and our relationships to conform more to the ideal of everyone being strong and self-sufficient and at the same time nurturing and caring and having relationships that have a balance of power in them. Lesbianism gives us an area in which we can try to restructure our relationships to make them more equal, tender, trusting, and affectionate rather than trying to take a ball game that already has two strikes against it which is what happens when you have a man and a woman and the society has already defined who the aggressive one is and who the submissive one is. When two women are able to come together in a relationship and one of their goals is equality, there is more of a clean slate about how they will work out conflicts and share decision making than there is in a heterosexual relationship. We are able to create better models of the way we want the world to be in ourselves and our relationships.

The following are some quotes from gay women about their relationships:

In every relationship two people's wills are never identical all the time. There always comes a time when one person wants to do something that the other person doesn't. It's natural to try in some way to convince your lover or friend to change her mind. The society has usually conditioned men to achieve their will in a different way than it has conditioned women. Men are taught to fight in a more or less straight forward way by persuasive argument, maybe shouting even, and definite statements of "it's going to be this way" to convince the other person that they mean what they say and their will is determined. Where would business be after all without determined salesmen, and adamant and confident doctors and lawyers? Some men also see physical force as giving weight to their arguments--a determined statement from someone who is bigger and stronger than you are makes you feel differently than from someone who is equal in size or strength or even smaller than you are.

Women aren't left without any weapons however. Our weapons are just not as satisfying or straightforward as the ones men have. If one acts in a way that isn't strong, then it's hard to see one's self as strong. For instance, the classic female weapon is to make others feel guilty. But in making someone else feel guilty we have to see ourselves as wounded and hurt. We have to dwell on and use our own pain as a weapon instead of using our will and self-interest in a powerful way. First we must allow ourselves to be hurt and then turn that hurt against the other person instead of strongly challenging someone before we get hurt.

Other female weapons are becoming adept with wounding statements or withdrawing into a passivity that puts all the burdens of all the decision making onto our partner and leaving us free to float in our own worlds rather than acting strongly in this one. And then there's always sexiness. Tenderness and affection can soften someone's anger. It's just not a very strong way to confront them.

When women are relating to each other all the above weapons that men and women have are possibilities for them to use in confronting each other. The question is do they want to leave behind unfair weapons and games and relate in an open honest trusting way. There are two things that are involved in working out good relationships. One is a desire that a lot of us have in the movement to have equal open trusting relationships. We want to create good equal supportive relationships. We don't want to have a lot of power over our partner. We want a strong person that we can get strengths from and we want our own strengths to be appreciated and respected.

Another positive factor is the discussion itself that goes on in the movement about

"Women can give to each other a new sense of self. That identity we have to develop with reference to ourselves, and not in relation to men. ... For this we must be available and supportive to one another, give our commitment and our love, give the emotional support necessary to sustain this movement. Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backwards toward our oppressors. As long as women's liberation tries to free women without facing the basic heterosexual structure that binds us in one-to-one relationships with our oppressors, tremendous energies will continue to flow into trying to straighten up each particular relationship with a man, how to get better sex, how to turn his head around--into trying to make a "new man" out of him, in the delusion that this will allow us to be the "new woman." This obviously splits out energies and commitments, leaving us unable to be committed to the construction of the new patterns which will liberate us. It is the primacy of women relating to

women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution. Together we must find, reinforce and validate our authentic selves." The Woman Identified Woman.

In order to have self-validation in a relationship mutual respect is a basic ingredient. If the male societal definition of women is a sex object with inferior brains. Nice but not as smart or tough as the big strong man, there is no way that there is going to be enough mutual respect to have a good relationship work out in which the constructive potentialities of each person can be supported and encouraged. Sidi power and sex and mind trip games are going to be the result.

Women see each other as less threatening often than they see men. The reduction of the sense of threat helps one to find a space where she can stop some of the games she plays with herself. Every person needs to come to self-acceptance and discover the actual strengths that are inside of everyone. Building self-acceptance is not a process like muscle building however. Basic sanity and wisdom in human life are inside of everyone. We have to be able to be still and get rid of enough outside pressures to look inside ourselves.

Another major area that lesbianism opens the possibilities of restructuring is sexuality. All of the capitalist American society is product oriented. We don't just sit and enjoy the now very much. We plan future delights or we castigate ourselves for things that happened in the past. We have a hard time being content with what is happening now. Sexuality is no exception.

We get excited with someone and then usually he and sometimes us starts thinking about how to make the end result of the orgasm happen. We strain to pull orgasm out of sexual pleasures that we feel. This is not the best way to have sexual experiences.

We need to relax and flow with them. It's a wonderful experience to not worry about whether our technique is going to turn him on and whether his techniques will result in an orgasm for us. If you feel desire for someone. You naturally want to touch and caress them. Women are usually much more in touch with the desires to cuddle and caress and not rush into pounding genital sex to whip out an orgasm fast. Women are more likely to want closeness and pleasure than men are. Men get excited very quickly and want to hurry to orgasms. So they have a few minutes of caressing the erotic zones of their partner and then they hurry to penetration and intercourse. The center of a woman's pleasure zone is the clitoris and for many women their anatomical structure is such that the activity of the penis in the vagina doesn't stimulate their clitoris enough for them to have an orgasm. So sex turns out to be rather disappointing.

This is what happens on a physical level. On the psychological and spiritual levels the picture is just as bad. If we feel threatened by our partner our psyches on some levels don't want us to relax and get vulnerable emotionally to our partner which is what usually happens in women when they are physically aroused. Our sexual pleasures are in fact connected to our emotions since we are integrated beings and are not mere separate categories of boxes called Sexuality, Emotion, Love.

Spiritually many of us like to think of making love as a dance uniting two souls hopefully moving to their union in some way. If she loves him, but he is not capable of loving her since he doesn't respect her. The sexuality is misdirected in a very basic way.

For many of us, sex with men has come to mean in some sense oppression and exploitation. It's one of the ways that we act out our second class status. Often the initiators of sex must be men. In bed the person who is setting the pace and calling the shots is the man. Would a man let a woman control things in bed if he doesn't in any other aspect of his life? Since his own sexuality is hurried rushed anxious and fucked up--most men

have orgasms very quickly after they begin intercourse--~~within ten~~ which it doesn't give themselves or their female partners time to build up enough excitement for a satisfying climax. This kind of sex is very removed from the more relaxed in touch pleasure that two women can have together. If feeling nice and expressing feelings is defined as your goal rather than reaching orgasm, the conditions are set for a sensuality which is a good experience. If we can learn to love ourselves and our own bodies and our sisters bodies, we are building up a much better and stronger self image than if we have to worry about whether our body is pleasing to The Man and whether we are pleasing him. We are giving our energies to ourselves more rather than dissipating them in a male wasteland. Lesbianism "is not another way to 'do it'; it is a whole other way to have contact." Smash Phallic Imperialism Katz.

BISEXUALITY

Bisexuality is the state of being open to love and closeness, and physical intimacy with both men and women. Many "experts" from Kinsey to Freud to Reich have indicated that it is the natural sexual state at birth. But, society usually intervenes to make the same sex taboo as to possibilities of physical intimacy. And the "militant" gay movement comes along to declare sexual intercourse with the opposite sex as politically bad. This leaves those people who have escaped society's conditioning somewhat or fought their way back to being open to sexuality with both men and women in a confusing position.

Sexuality is political--that is: it is involved with power relationships. However, bisexuality can be a way of observing "buth and fem" power plays in both sexes and hopefully coming to some new synthesis of behavior without role stereotypes and with a minimum of manipulative power plays.

Any relationship brings up conflicts of wills at times. Grossly generalizing, men are use to enforcing their will by direct straightforward means like getting angry and shouting. Women have less satisfying methods like making others feel guilty or complaining so that the other pørson can't enjoy the concession they have won.

One of the most important things in making equal relationships is the desire of both people to have a sharing of power and to be willing to discuss and to try to overcome their own power plays. Having relationships with both men and women is a way to learn about power games on both sides of the fence and to learn what men and women are really like as we continually try to discard the roles society has laid on us.

One of the goals of the women's movement is to change the conditioning we have about male/female roles in society. Women help each other change by supporting each other in behavior which goes against the stereotypes of what is feminine in society. When some women interact closely with men and are able to be in touch with their masculine side and support the femine side of the men they are with, they are aiding in the process of men chaning their conditioning about masculine role behavior.

Another advantage of bisexuality is the feedback a woman gets on how much she has succeeded in translating the strengths she found with other women into the same kind of strengths with men. Because of the way we were conditioned, it is easier to act strong in relationships with women than it is in relationships with men. The white knight on the horse that was suppose to sweep us away some day was never pictured as female. Since society has both men and women in it, its good to learn how to be strong in interactions with men as well as interactions with women.

Lesbianism in itself does not solve all the problems of

mainly getting feedback on their interactions from each other, the partner that is more verbally competent, or that can shout the loudest or be the most intimidating is likely to be the one that will have more power. Perhaps another solution for solving the problem of dominance and submission within relationships is communal living. If one is willing to let other people contribute meaningfully in arguments (and in good times) it is less likely that the weaker person will get their head trashed around by whatever trip the stronger person is laying on them.

Another question of power and sexuality is that of power within the women's movement or the old leftist game of who is more militant than who. It's absurd for women who once were saying "stop making us sex objects, we have minds and ideas too" to discriminate against each other on the basis of who another woman has sex with. What if she is a woman identified in the rest of her thoughts and actions, but happens to be in love with a man or just to feel good about including sexuality in her relations with some men? Isn't she a feminist too? Our numbers in the women's movement will get smaller and smaller if we keep defining more and more women as not one of "us".

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CAUTION: Reading sex manuals can fuck up your pleasure in sex.

We think that every sex manual including this one is mainly hearsay about sexuality. The only exception ^{we} can think of is the work of Master's and Johnson who actually did "scientific" research on sexuality so that you can trust them as far as you can trust scientific research.

A note on scientific research--Science isolates one variable to examine what other factors make the one variable change. This tends to straight line--this causes that--thinking whereas life is a coming together of many things influencing each other at once. It is very difficult for science to understand the workings of humans which are multi-influenced and complexes of many factors creating actions and decisions. Also even in "pure" scientific research it is almost impossible to stop the bias of the research^{er} from influencing the result he gets.

You shouldn't necessarily believe manuals and you certainly shouldn't believe them in contradiction to what your own senses tell you about pleasure. People who write about sexuality are doing it from their own experience and what other people have told them about their experiences. No matter how many people you have sex with it's a limited range of personalities compared to the total range of personalities in the world. One thing that seems clear is that there is a tremendous amount of variation in people due to physiological differences and the way that different environments make people act differently.

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So whatever absolutes you read in a sex manual, it is only what someone's opinion is about "the true nature of sexuality" rather than an authority you should believe in contradiction to yourself.

The difference between this sex manual and the others.

This manual was written because as I read the popular sex manuals on the bookracks we today, got angry or sick. Most sex manuals in a not-so-subtle way put men first-- perhaps because most are written by men or men-identified women. This is a feminist sex manual. It focuses on woman--her pleasure, her problems.

Popular sex manuals are focused on men even when they are discussing women. Women are told things like you can learn to time your orgasm to match his. You can learn how to be sexy and have orgasms so that he will feel satisfied in lovemaking. The emphasis is always on the performance of the right techniques rather than any discussion of the whole context of the relationship which includes sex. The manuals usually imply that sex is the answer to problems in relationships and the key to a happy fulfilling life.

The emphasis on performance has negative consequences for women and men. If both people are wondering how they are doing at turning the other one on, no one is going to be able to relax and enjoy the sensations as they arise within. The psychological context is very important in how much one enjoys caresses. The same touch that can be very exciting when done by someone you want to be with very much can do nothing for you when you don't feel so excited about the person who is doing it.

Another bad aspect to the popular sex manuals is that they are totally heterosexual. It is always assumed that the people are a man and a woman. You would never dream that anything else existed by reading them. Or, gayness is mentioned and condemned.

Even the discussions of the techniques themselves did not seem adequate for women. The emphasis seemed to run much more to different positions possible in coitus rather than specific techniques that could be used for teaching a woman how to masturbate.

To write this manual, ^{we} left the books behind and interviewed women about their techniques, politics toward men and women, romance, love, and their fantasies. Techniques and fantasies are very delicate areas to talk about--many people don't want to discuss them since people seem to feel that their fantasies and what they do in the bedroom are the one place where they can maintain their privacy. But some women were brave and together we've compiled this manual. The next section includes the techniques and fantasies we've compiled.

Love-making for One

Masturbation is a good way to find out about yourself. You can learn about the eroticism of your own body and where your most sensitive pleasure zones are. You can experiment with all kinds of caresses on your breasts and along your arms, and torso and legs and on your genitals. There are many different kinds of clitoral caresses. A caress that might get one woman very excited, would do nothing or merely be irritating to someone else. If your only method of finding out about what you like sexually is through your lovers, you may never discover what kind of lovemaking you like best. And in many cases never learn how to build up pleasure to an orgasm.

Women often don't talk about masturbation. Often when they discover it as children, they don't know what it is when they do it. And, many people stop masturbating out of fear that there is something wrong with it or that the fully satisfied happily married woman doesn't need to do it.

Masturbation as well as our bodies is surrounded by myths like these. It should be seen as a positive good thing to do--not something that you need to sneak off to a dark corner, and do, and then feel guilty about.

You can also learn about your mind when you make love to yourself. Erotic sensations are in many people accompanied by flashes of mind pictures--fantasy. ~~Many~~ Many people while masturbating often fantasize situations which include sex with other people--sometimes it's people of the opposite sex--sometimes it's people of the same sex--sometimes it's animals; some women picture other people watching them. Many women picture sado/masochistic scenes. Fantasy can include all the possibilities that aren't actually happening ⁱⁿ this world. Fantasy is a way to not be alone when you are and don't want to be, and is a way to explore things you might not want to do in "real" life.

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There is also a wide variation in how fantasy occurs. Some people just get a flash of a scene in their minds as they are nearing orgasm. Other people consciously make up imaginary stories or find them in books in order to get aroused before they start masturbating. If you have trouble getting excited when you want to make love to yourself--fantasy is a good thing to try.

Fantasy as well as masturbation has been seen as not healthy by "experts". Freud thought that happy people didn't have fantasies only unsatisfied ones did. Wilhelm Reich thought that fantasies were a distraction keeping people from the full orgasmic surrender.

What researchers are finding out today is that most women do have fantasies during masturbation and during intercourse. Kinsey in Sexual Behavior in the Human Female reports that 2/3 of the women interviewed in his study fantasied during masturbation. A study reported in the March '73 issue of Psychology Today reported that 65% of the women interviewed had fantasies during intercourse. The researcher, Barbara Hanton noted that her informants who had positive thoughts about their husbands were just as likely to have fantasies as women with negative thoughts about their mates. Often women who had fantasies of being overpowered and being passive were in their lives aggressive with their mates. Many women with creative interests fantasied.

In other words, the official statements of today are that "normal" people fantasy. But "what does fantasy tell us about ourselves" is still an interesting question. One way to learn from fantasies that come up is to think about them later and see what other associations are evoked in your mind. You can sometimes get insights into things like what kind of needs you are really trying to satisfy or whether you have guilt feelings hanging around.

In interviewing women about their fantasies I found many different kinds of fantasies--Common themes were: making love with someone you wanted very much sometimes the lover was female and othertimes the lover was male, being watched by several people while making love or making love with more than one person, and being overpowered and forced to have sex.

The three following fantasies have to do with the latter theme. I chose these fantasies because they happened to be the most detailed ones. Many of the women who were willing to talk about their fantasies only stated the subject matter and did not have a story to tell along with it. Helen, the conceiver of these fantasies had a strongly religious background and felt that fantasizing that she was being overpowered was a way to take away the guilt that her religion had made her feel about sexual activity. She didn't fantasize during intercourse, but when masturbating, she found it exciting to make up stories about being overpowered. She had fantasized about sex long before she experienced it which perhaps explains the vividness and detail in her fantasies.

Let me end by saying that fantasy is certainly not a necessity for a good sex life. Many people concentrate on the sensations they are feeling and the other person during love-making. Some theorists assert that this is the best way to be totally there with the other person. Likewise, feeling the sensations alone is enough for some women when they make love to themselves.

WHY TALK ABOUT TECHNIQUES

Women often talk about relationships but not about specific techniques that make them feel good. We need to demystify our bodies and "the sex act". We need to learn how to be comfortable with our body and with sex. Many of us feel that it is dirty or icky to touch ourselves. We wait to let men do it. But as J. (who is certainly no feminist) says in The Sensuous Woman, "Men don't have the patience to explore your body thoroughly while they are sexually excited themselves." We need to work on feeling that our bodies are not dirty and disgusting, but are beautiful and strong. You need to feel good about your body in order to feel good about yourself and to be able to relate well with another person.

The following pages include techniques you can explore with yourself and with other women. For heterosexual techniques which is what all the other manuals emphasize--there are books such as The Sensuous Woman by J. Lyle Stuart inc. New York, 1969, and The Marriage Art by Eichenlaub, Dell Publishing Co. New York 1961. Both of these books focus on women pleasing men.

In life physical caresses are usually not isolated like they are on the following pages, but are connected to our emotions. As I have dealt in the preceeding pages with emotional issues and relationship questions--the following pages are devoted to explanations of physical techniques to help you get in touch with your body and the pleasures possible with sexual caresses.

MASTERBATION I.

Sensory Awareness Exercise:

Take a hot bath with the extras of incense and a candle. Use a shampoo spray at the end to run cold water over your face. Cold water feels really soothing run back and forth over your forehead. Then run the cold spray over your shoulders and down your back and front. You can't miss the different physical sensations the two contrasting temperatures have on your skin. Then you may want to let some of the water out of the tub and play with the spray on your clitoris. You can vary the pressure and temperature. Some women say climaxes are very easy to have with the use of a shampoo spray or showerhead on your genitals.

Masterbation Exercise:

Moisten your clitoris with saliva. Lying on your back, with your legs open, gently rub along the sides of your clitoris. Also rub along the very tip, very slowly on the even more sensitive area. After you have tickled, teased and aroused your clitoris and sexual feeling, penetrate your vagina with your middle finger. Press upward toward your clitoris. Alternate playing inside your vagina and outside with your clitoris for awhile. Turn over on your stomach. Then while you play with one hand underneath your clitoris, reach behind you with your other hand and start gentle thrusts against your anus to penetrate it. When your anus is penetrated, enter your vagina with your middle finger and press hard and rhythmically upwards while you make in and out thrusts in your anus. Continue playing this way until you have an orgasm or get tired.



To masturbate comfortably: (comfort necessary for hard-working, tired people)

1st-In place caress of zones. #1-4 Apply pressure (usually with index finger) and keeping hand in one place move it back and forth.

2nd. - Need sexual fantasy to increase arousal and produce smegma. Bisexual fantasies: sex with improper stranger, and "Oldie but Goodie" theme: phone repair man or latest (yet unattained) female attraction.

3rd- When area becomes "wet" due to dipping finger in vagina, active finger caresses (strokes along sides of rigid clitoral area becomes "wet" due to dipping finger in vagina, active finger caresses (strokes along sides of rigid clitoral area become comfortable- principally #1 to 4 & 6 - alternating sides as excitement increases.) There is usually a preferred side of clitoral mound which may coincide with right handedness. (left). Alternate rapidity of strokes and pressures. Areas not sensitive at first may become sensitive after they are played with over a period of time. Direct contact on tip of clitoris can be pleasurable if light and rapid, alternating with up and down strokes on the sides.

